

**A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY LEARNING
CENTRES IN MITIGATING GENDER DISPARITIES IN THE CACADU DISTRICT
OF THE EASTERN CAPE**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, XOLISWA TAWANA declare that the above research project submitted in the fulfilment of my Doctor's Degree in Socio-education is my own work and that it has never been produced before in any other institution. Furthermore, I declare that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



28 February 2019

Signature

Date

XOLISWA TAWANA

February 2019

DEDICATION

The research study is dedicated to:

The memory of my beloved parents, Marjorie and Robinson Tawana. Your love and spirit remain with me always.

To my sisters and brothers. I would not be the person I am today without you, so thank you for your influence in my life.

To my sons, Tiro and Tirelo. The decision to pursue a doctorate with two little children was, of course, a difficult one. Nonetheless, it turned out to be a blessing in disguise. You motivated me to study harder and manage my time.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated issues of gender discrimination in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape and the possible role that Community Learning Centres could play in mitigating gender disparities in this particular district. The aim of the study was to recommend ways in which Community Learning Centres could assist people in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. The study examined scholarly and professional publications, both theoretical and empirical, that support or challenge the proposed focal area. The study was underpinned by post-colonial feminism. Contrary to Western feminism, post-colonial feminism is primarily concerned with the representation of women in once colonized countries. The paradigm deemed to be the most appropriate in undergirding this study was a post-colonial indigenous paradigm which can be seen as context based and inclusive of all knowledge systems. The research approach was qualitative and the research design adopted for the study was phenomenological. Two Community Learning Centres (Xola and Zodwa) located in a rural and an urban area respectively in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape were selected by purposive sampling. Data gathering was conducted through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Three adult educators volunteered to participate in individual interviews and twenty-four adult learners volunteered to participate in focus group discussions. Findings indicated that Community Learning Centres in their attempt to promote equity and redress do not help people mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Based on the findings, it was found that gender disparities emanate not only in the home, but also in Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Finally, strategies were identified in the form of educational practices, processes and developments to assist people to mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Such educational strategies should be characterised by fairness, equality and the values embedded in social justice with reference to the role of women in society.

KEY WORDS: Gender, Post-colonial, Patriarchy, Power relations, Gender disparity, Equity, Equality, Social justice, Empowerment. Hidden curriculum,

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AQIP	Academic Qualifications Improvement Programme
CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women
CLC	Community Learning Centres
CHE	Council of Higher Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DECD	Department for Education and Child Development.
DFID	Department for International Development
EC	European Commission
GAD	Gender and Development
GETC	Community Education and Training Centres
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LO	Life Orientation
NASCA	National Senior Certificate for Adults
NC	National Certificate
NFALP	Non- formal and Adult Literacy Programmes
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NFE	Non-formal education
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OSW	Office of Status of Women
PALC	Public Adult Learning Centres

RSA	Republic of South Africa
SAQA	South African Qualification Authority
UNESCO	United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UIL	Institute for Lifelong Learning
UN	United Nations
UNISA	University of South Africa
WVI	World Vision International
WAD	Women and Development
WID	Women in Development
GAD	Gender and Development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	vi
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	vii
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	2
1.3 CONCEPTUALISING THE PUBLIC ADULT LEARNING CENTRES IN SOUTH AFRICA	5
1.3.1 The South African Qualification Authority (SAQA)	5
1.3.2 The future of Public Adult Learning Centres.....	8
1.4 RATIONALE AND RELEVANCE OF THIS STUDY.....	9
1.5 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS USED IN THE STUDY	10
1.5.1 Research questions.....	20
1.5.2 Aims and objectives of this study	20
1.5.3 Specific objectives of this study.....	21
1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	21
1.6.1 Phenomenology	22
1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	22
1.8 RESEARCH PARADIGM	23
1.9 RESEARCH METHODS	24
1.9.1 Interviews	24
1.9.2 Focus group interviews	25
1.10 SAMPLE.....	25
1.11 DATA ANALYSIS	28
1.12 TRUSTWORTHINESS	28
1.12.1 Credibility	29
1.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	29
1.14 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS	30
1.15 CONCLUSION	31
CHAPTER 2.....	32
LITERATURE REVIEW	32
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	32
2.2 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA.....	33

2.3	ADULT EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA	33
2.3.1	Adult education for democratic citizenship	34
2.3.1.1	Civil rights	35
2.3.1.2	Political rights.....	36
2.3.1.3	Socio-economic rights.....	36
2.4	ADULT EDUCATION FOR LIFELONG LEARNING	39
2.4.1	Lifelong learning for equity, equality and redress	40
2.4.2	Lifelong learning and national qualification framework.....	41
2.5	STUDIES RELATED TO THE ROLE OF ADULT EDUCATION IN DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES	42
2.5.1	Studies related on the role of adult education in mitigating gender disparities in South Africa.....	45
2.5.1.1	Studies related in the Eastern Cape on the role of adult education in mitigating gender disparities	46
2.5.2	Studies carried out on the impact of gender disparities.....	49
2.5.3	Strategies that are usually employed to assist women mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in South Africa.....	50
2.6	THE WOMEN EMPOWERMENT BILL.....	51
2.7	WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (WID, WAD and GAD approaches).....	53
2.7.1	Women in development.....	53
2.7.2	Women and development framework.....	55
2.7.3	Gender and development framework	56
2.8	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	58
2.8.1	Systems theory	58
2.8.2	Humanistic and development theories	59
2.8.3	The transformative learning theory.....	60
2.8.4	Critical pedagogy	61
2.9	Feminism.....	66
2.9.1	History of feminism.....	67
2.9.2	Western feminism and its main branches.....	68
2.9.2.1	Liberal / Cultural feminism	68
2.9.2.2	Socialist Feminism/ Marxist feminism	69
2.9.2.3	Radical feminism.....	69
2.9.2.4	Multicultural and global feminism/Ecofeminism.....	69
2.9.3	Post-colonial theory and Post-colonial feminism	71
2.9.3.1	Post-colonial feminism theory	71
2.9.3.2	Theoretical concerns of post-colonial feminism	72
a)	Representation and location	72

2.9.4	Post-colonial feminism in education	73
2.9.4.1	Strengths and weaknesses of post-colonial feminist thought.....	74
2.9.4.2	Relevance of post-colonial feminist thought to the study	75
2.10	CONCLUSION	78
CHAPTER 3	.....	79
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	.....	79
3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	79
3.2	RESEARCH DESIGN.....	80
3.2.1	Research approach.....	81
3.2.1.1	Relevance of qualitative research to the present study.....	81
3.2.2.1	Types of phenomenology.....	83
3.2.2.2	Husserl and the descriptive inquiry	83
3.2.2.3	The relationship between feminism and phenomenology	84
3.2.2.4	Relevance of hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology to the present study	84
3.3	RESEARCH PARADIGM	85
3.3.1	Promoters of post-colonial indigenous paradigm	89
3.3.2	Strengths of a post-colonial indigenous paradigm.....	89
3.3.3	Relevance of a post-colonial indigenous paradigm to the present study	91
3.4	RESEARCH METHODS	92
3.4.1	The interview method.....	93
3.4.1.1	Advantages of interviews	94
3.4.1.2	Disadvantages of interviews	95
3.4.2	Focus group discussions.....	96
3.4.2.1	Advantages of focus group discussions.....	96
3.4.2.2	Disadvantages of focus groups.....	97
3.4.3	Population	98
3.4.4	Sampling	99
3.4.4.1	Sampling procedures	100
3.4.4.2	Choosing the Community Learning Centres to participate in the research.....	100
3.4.4.4	Selection of participants in Xola Community Learning Centre	101
3.4.4.5	Choosing participants from the selected rural centre from Zodwa Community Learning Centre	103
3.4.4.6	Selection of participants in Zodwa Community Learning Centre...	103
3.4.4.7	Gaining access to the participants	104
3.4.5	Data collection procedure.....	105

3.4.6	Data analysis.....	106
3.4.7	Trustworthiness.....	107
3.4.7.1	Credibility	107
3.4.7.2	Dependability	108
3.4.7.3	Transferability	108
3.4.7.4	Confirmability	108
3.4.8	Ethical considerations	109
3.4.8.1	Informed consent	109
3.4.8.2	Confidentiality	110
3.4.8.3	Privacy	110
3.4.8.4	Anonymity	110
3.4.8.5	The right to withdrawal.....	110
3.5	CONCLUSION	111
CHAPTER 4.....		112
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS.....		112
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	112
4.3	CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY	114
4.3.1	Demographic profile of adult educators.....	114
4.3.1.1	Gender.....	115
4.3.1.2	Programme	115
4.3.1.3	Professional qualification	115
4.3.1.4	Experience	116
4.3.2	Demographic profile of adult learners.....	116
4.3.2.1	Sex.....	118
4.3.2.2	Grade.....	118
4.3.2.3	Occupation status	118
4.4	RESPONSES OF THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS	119
4.4.1	Thematic analysis of data.....	119
4.4.2	Key factors that perpetuate experiences of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.....	120
4.4.2.1	Theme 1: Power and control in the curriculum.....	120
4.4.3	Experiences of gender disparities as impacting on the socio- economic development of women in Community Learning Centre in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape?	124
4.4.3.1	Theme 2: Lack of meeting women's needs and interests	124
4.4.4	Strategies that can be employed by Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape	125
4.4.4.1	Theme 3: Intervention strategies.....	125

4.5	RESPONSES OF THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS.....	127
4.5.1	Thematic analysis of data.....	130
4.5.1.1	Key factors that perpetuate experiences of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape	130
4.5.1.2	Theme 1: Roles, control and relations	130
4.5.2	Experienced gender disparities on socio-economic development of women In Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape	133
4.5.2.1	Theme 2: Socio-economic factors.....	133
4.5.3	Strategies that can be employed by Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape	135
4.5.3.1	Theme 3: Intervention strategies.....	135
4.5.4	Thematic analysis of data from women-only focus groups in Xola and Zodwa Community Learning Centres	138
4.5.4.1	Key factors that perpetuate experiences of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape	138
4.5.5	Experienced gender disparities as impacting on socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape	140
4.5.5.1	Theme 2: Socio-economic factors.....	140
4.5.6	Strategies that can be employed by the Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eeastern Cape	142
4.5.6.1	Theme 3: Intervention strategies.....	142
4.6	DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS	145
4.6.1	Key factors that perpetuate experiences of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.....	145
4.6.1.1	Power and control in the curriculum.....	145
4.6.1.2	The hidden curriculum	147
4.6.1.3	Power relations	148
4.6.1.4	Socialisation/ gender role stereotypes	149
4.6.1.5	Status of women	151
4.6.2	Experiences of gender disparities as impacting on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape	152
4.6.2.1	Stereotypes of career choices.....	152
4.6.2.2	Lack of confidence and low self-esteem	152
4.6.2.3	Less power in the household	153
4.6.2.4	Lack of Control over fertility	153
4.6.2.5	Employment in low-paying jobs.....	153
4.6.2.6	Lack of readiness by women to compete with men.....	154

4.6.3	Recommend ways in which Community Learning Centres can assist by mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape	154
4.6.3.1	Professional development.....	154
4.6.3.2	Capabilities of both men and women must be recognised.....	155
4.6.3.3	Gender sensitisation	156
4.6.3.4	Empowerment.....	157
4.6.3.5	Social justice	157
4.7	Conclusion	158
CHAPTER 5	.....	159
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	.....	159
5.1	INTRODUCTION.....	159
5.2	MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY	160
5.2.1.	Recommendations that Community Learning Centre need to take into account in addressing the key factors that perpetuate the experiences of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape	161
5.2.2	Experiences of gender disparities as impacting on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. ...	162
5.2.3	Recommendations on what Community Learning Centres can do to mitigate gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape	163
5.3	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	167
5.4	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY	168
5.5	CONCLUSION	169
REFERENCES	.....	170
ANNEXURES	.....	204

TABLES

Table 4.1: Equivalence of Adult Education levels to school grades	7
Table 4.1: Codes for adult centres	113
Table 4.2 Codes for interview responses	114
Table 4.3: Codes for focus group responses.....	114
Table 4.4: Demographic profile of adult facilitators	115
Table 4.5 Demographic profile of adult learners.....	117
Table 4.6: Emerging themes and sub-themes from semi-structured interviews	119
Table 4.7: Emerging themes and sub-themes from focus group discussions	129

ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: Interview schedule for adult educators	204
ANNEXURE B: Interview schedule for focus group discussions (mixed).....	205
ANNEXURE C: Interview schedule for focus group discussions (women-only) ..	206
ANNEXURE D: Follow-up questions to the sites (individual interviews)	207
ANNEXURE E: Follow-up questions to the sites (focus group discussions)	208
ANNEXURE F: Letter seeking permission to conduct the study from the Department of Higher Learning.....	210
ANNEXURE G: Letter of acceptance from the Director of Department of Learning	212
ANNEXURE H: Informed consent form for the participants	213
ANNEXURE I: Ethical clearance certificate	218
ANNEXURE J: Proof of registration	219

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world, many see adult education as a means of addressing some of the economic, political and social inequalities in our society. For this reason, millions of adults particularly women who could not attend school during their youth due to multiplicity of factors are provided with basic education. The efforts to change the status of the marginalized groups are therefore in line with constitutional provisions and international conventions, such as the Education for All (United Nations [UN], 2006:06). Moreover, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1997), the Copenhagen Declaration (1995), the Millennium Goals (2000) and the Sustainable Development Goals have been applied over a period of time and established concrete action programmes to integrate gender equity in education (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2011:01).

In the process of promoting and achieving women's empowerment, several policy approaches have also been used by many countries. Examples include the Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD), Gender and Development (GAD). These strategies shaped policy interventions and informed scholarly reflections in the 1960s and 1970s. Rippenaar-Joseph (2009:90) notes that the current approach, gender mainstreaming (GM), is about moving women and gender issues from the margin to the centre of development in organizations and their practice, while being an improvement on the earlier approaches (UNDP, 2011).

Achieving high quality in adult learning programmes therefore, depends in large measures on the availability of knowledgeable, skilful, sensitive and socially committed adult educators (Youngman, 2005:06). Oduaran and Modise (2009:273) state that "in many nations, adult education is being urgently asked to specify ways and means by which it seeks to enhance directly the total living, productive and competitive capacities of its target audience." Reinforcing this position, Obasi (2014:27) argues that adult education is a field of study necessary in national development as its applicability cut across sectors.

It is therefore critical that adult education through research justifies its position as a possible partner in economic, social and human development. UNESCO (2009) also notes that adult education is now more than ever becoming known as emancipation tool that uses the originality of thought of the people, but is also a way of empowering people with knowledge and skills to better their lives. Further, adult education as the educational action that often includes a focus on social justice issues should decolonize and indigenous education. For the decolonisation of adult education, Mampane & Omidire (2018) advises that, research into the depth of the construct has to be executed with the goal of developing curricula that addresses the needs and interests of students.

This chapter therefore provides an overview of the problem under investigation. The research problem on which this study focuses is: Community Learning Centres as supposedly geared in terms of policy to promote equity and redress in their present form may not help people reduce gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. This chapter begins by giving a background to the study and how Adult Education is conceptualised in South Africa in order to provide an understanding on the possible role that could be played by the Community Learning Centres in helping people to mitigate gender disparities in South Africa. Based on the research in the Cacadu district, it is suggested that some of the findings may be transferable to other contexts in South Africa too. The research questions are indicated in this chapter as well as the aims and objectives, delimitations and significance of the study. Further, the methodology is discussed in order to elucidate the underpinnings of the study. Finally, an overview of the steps employed in conducting this study is presented in this chapter.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

There is a growing acceptance and recognition of the important role women play in the development process. Women are crucial to the success of family planning programs; bear much of the responsibility for food production and account for an increasing share of wage labour in Africa (Anunobi, 2002). Despite their significant contributions, women continue to face formidable social, economic and political barriers. Moreover, there are still a number of cultural practices that are still harmful to the physical, emotional and psychological integrity of women and girl children.

Some of these practices cause women unpleasant physical pain while others subject them to humiliating and degrading treatment, for example, female genital mutilation.

According to Nwambeni and Slot-Nielsen (2011), harmful traditional practices emanate from the deeply entrenched discriminatory views and beliefs about the role and position of women in society. Some cultural practices maintain the subordination of women in society and legitimise and perpetuate gender-based violence. For example, in the Eastern Cape some cultural practices are still harmful to the integrity of the individuals especially women and girl children. An example is the practice of *Ukuthwala*, which is a form of abduction that involves kidnapping a girl or a young woman by a man and his friends or peers with the intention of compelling a girl or young woman's family to endorse marriage negotiation (Iyanuola, 2008; Maluleke, 2009).

In most parts of Africa, including South Africa, men think that once *lobola* (dowry) is paid they have bought the woman and could treat her as they please. The man can also claim possession of the wife. The wife then becomes subject not only to him, but also to the entire family (Gerenne, Tollman, Collins & Ngwenya, 2001). Zondi (2007: 22) adds that ideas and attitudes portrayed in African cultural notions of male patriarchy abound within marital relationships where the subordination of women is understood by the tradition of *ilobola* or brideprice which reinforces the notion that a husband has purchased and now owns his wife underscores the power dynamics of African, including her labour and sexuality. In fact, as Bowman (2003:853) notes, the custom of *ilobola* underscores the power dynamics of African communities. However, patriarchy is a visible characteristic of all societies in Southern Africa. Moreover, the payment of the bride price to the family of the wife prior to the marriage makes it difficult for women to leave abusive husbands, unless their families are willing to return the amount or cattle paid

In Africa gender disparities are more intense due largely to the legacy of western imperialism. Anunobi (2002) defines imperialism as "the process of establishing and maintaining an empire". This process may entail substantial delegation of decision-making authority to elite members of the colony, but the metropole retains the power to decide what gets delegated and how and when this authority is revoked.

Also, the economic and structural changes introduced by colonial powers, and later imposed by international lending and development agencies have further widened the gender inequalities in Africa (Anunobi, 2002). Women are still unrecognized as full partners either in the family or in the society. Moreover, unequal rights to own land or apply for credit deprive women of their resources for their livelihood and for security in old age, leaving them more dependent on male relatives. The wider gender disparities in schooling meanwhile produce correspondingly different abilities for women and men to acquire and process information and to communicate. The gender imbalance in resources and power also has consequences for the relative autonomy of women and their influence in household decision-making (World Bank, 2001).

In this study gender disparity is used to point out that women, especially poor women and those residing in rural areas, often endure the greatest of gender disparities. Gender disparity is distinct from other forms of economic and social inequalities. It dwells not only outside the household but also centrally within. It stems from the pre-existing differences in economic endowment between women and men but also from pre-existing gendered social norms and social perceptions. Gender disparities are usually hidden, suffered in silence by individuals and invisible until later in life. These disparities also have adverse impact on development goals as they reduce economic participation and hamper the overall well-being of women because they block women from participating in social, political and economic activities (Lindsey, 2005).

The present study also argues that the systematic nature of inequalities cannot be redressed by formal equality while it ignores adopted and constructively produced inequalities. World Bank (2005) points out that for equality to be achieved, formal equality has to be differentiated from equity. Equity is based on the idea of moral equality, the principle that people should be treated as equals despite many differences they possess. Equality is seen as a human right issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development (UNESCO, 2004). Further, redress requires a state that has the political commitment to institute measures that favour those who were and are disadvantaged through positive discrimination. Redress measures are especially critical for ensuring the social advancement of individuals from socially disadvantaged and marginalised groups. The study begins with the premise that a good quality public adult education is critical for social justice in and through education (Sen, 2009; World Bank, 2005).

This is necessary for the formation of the intellectual and other capabilities of individuals, their cultivation as lifelong learners, their functioning as economically and socially productive people and their participation as critical and democratic citizens. Against this background a study on the role of Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape in terms of their possible contribution to mitigating gender disparities becomes crucial.

1.3 CONCEPTUALISING THE PUBLIC ADULT LEARNING CENTRES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Department of Higher Education and Training (2015) noted that a policy decision was made in the mid-nineties (1990s) to retain the system of having adult education classes run as an appendix to the school system, largely staffed by school teachers contracted to teach for a few extra hours a week, that is from 15:00 to 18:00 hours. The state-run evening classes called Public Adult Learning Centres was the term used in the adult education system. There has been a move from Public Adult Learning Centres to Adult Learning Centres and then presently Community Learning Centres (CLCs). As stated by the Department of Higher Education and Training in 2015 (Act No.1 of 2013) Adult education was the responsibility of the DoE, then the DBE, now DHET. This was to group the education of adults under the supervision of the Department of Higher Education and Training. Furthermore, the Paper for Post-school education and Training (DHET, 2013) acknowledged that educational opportunities for adults and post school youth have been insufficient and their quality were generally been poor. With the abolition of the Act in 2013 and in terms of the Further Education and Training College Amendment Act of 2013, they were established, by legal order on 1 April 2015.

1.3.1 The South African Qualification Authority (SAQA)

The South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) adopted a framework with eight levels of qualifications but later increased to ten levels. These are divided into three broad bands providing for Higher Education and Training Certificates, Further Education and Training (FETC) and General Education and Training Certificates (GETC). The NQF levels run from Adult Basic Education and Training all the way to Doctoral degrees.

These levels are divided into three broad bands providing for general, further and higher education and training. The following three major levels points can be identified (SAQA, 2008)

- General education and training marks the completion of general education, including the three ABET sub-levels;
- Further education and training (ABET level 2 to 4) marks the completion of further education whether school-based or work-based;
- Grade 10, 11 and 12 marks the completion of the matric certificate (NQF 2-4);
- Further Education and Training Certificates (level 5-10) marks the completion of College or University- based education.

1.3.2 Subjects offered in Community Learning Centres

The courses offered in Community Learning Centres for national certificate are language, literacy and communication; mathematics literacy, mathematics and mathematics science; technology and economic management science. The specific subjects that fall under these learning areas include language, numeracy, mathematics, biology, accountancy, business economics, history and geography and life orientation. Table 1.1 shows the placement of levels in relation to the equivalent school grades.

Table 1.1 Equivalence of Adult Education levels to school grades

NQF level		Qualification type
Higher Education and Training Certificate		
10		Doctoral
9		Masters degree
8		Bachelor's honours degree/post graduate diploma/Bachelor Degree
7		Bachelor's degree/advanced certificate
6		Diploma/Advanced certificate
5		Higher certificate
Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC)		
4	Grade 12	
3	Grade 11	
2	Grade 10	
General Education and Training Certificate (GETC)		
1	Grade 9, ABET level 4 or GET certificate	

Source: SAQA (2008)

The Policy document on Adult Education (1997: v) also contains core values of Adult education such as equity and redress, democracy, development and reconstruction, access and development and integration. These central values recommend that the basic education that is offered should be of high quality.

1.3.2 The future of Public Adult Learning Centres

The Department of Higher Education and Training (2013) signals the intention to introduce a new type of institution in the post-schooling terrain, the Community Colleges. Current Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) are converted into Community Colleges which provide formal and non-formal education and training opportunities for youths and adults. The department also envisaged that these colleges will collectively absorb the millions of youths and adults who have never attended school or drop out of formal schooling. The policy for developing qualifications for lecturers at ACET is being utilised to develop a new curriculum to train lecturers or educators who will further train youth and adults for further education and youth skills development (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). New certificates will be awarded after the completion of the course to the adults known as the General Education and Training Certificate for Adults (GETCA). The aim of this certificate is to link the opinions of industry to formal education and address the issues based on social, economic and local needs of a diversified society. The GETCA focuses around a curriculum instead of a selection of unit standards. Generally, a good curriculum potentially centres on putting together core areas of learning and to facilitate critical thinking, attitudes and values. For this reason, learners can obtain in-depth knowledge rather than glancing over it. In this respect, it is also assumed that the quality of learning offered by the GETCA will revive an interest in learning for many who have negative experiences in schools or were denied such opportunities in the past (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). The adult learner wanting to earn a GETCA will also need to write a national examination for each subject with an accredited assessment body. A minimum of 50% is required in each of the subjects. In terms of the proposed rating codes, learners achieving between 50% to 69% will receive a rating of 3. Motivated and keen learners may achieve the GETCA in as little as twelve months. In addition to GETCA, adult learners will soon have a pathway into GETCA senior phase, the National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA). Both qualifications are designed in a similar way to guarantee that the adult learner is no longer discriminated against, but has a genuine and sensible route in gaining access to higher learning. This qualification will also stand as a significant success in the history of education in South Africa with its solid, but sensible pass mark. It is also assumed that these new transformations will bear fruit in industry, institutions and broader society (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013).

These initiatives sound good and promising. There has been significant progress in the representation of black women students in higher education. However, the challenges faced by rural Colleges in the Eastern Cape have been reported by the portfolio committee on education (Emerging voices, 2005). Some of the observations made include geographical distribution where these Colleges are situated and mostly characterised by high employment rate and few work opportunities. Large numbers of African women students continue to be concentrated in distance education and are still under-represented in science, engineering and technology, business and commerce programmes (Emerging voices, 2005).

Taking education to the people is of the utmost importance if we want to mitigate gender disparities in Community Colleges. Waddington (2002) notes that, addressing rural poverty and delivering quality education to rural communities are perhaps the greatest challenge facing South Africa. Tager in Waddington (2002) emphasised that “it is not always a lack of resources that causes poverty but rather the lack of information regarding the possible use of resources”. Tager in waddington (2002) therefore advises that, Colleges should maximise human capital through education and provide relevant information for the sustainable use of local natural resources.

1.4 RATIONALE AND RELEVANCE OF THIS STUDY

The rationale of this study is to contribute to information on the possible role that could be played by Community Learning Centres in assisting people to mitigate gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape:

1. The study is expected to help the Department of Higher Education and Training, educational planners and education decision-makers come up with different perspectives on trying to mitigate gender disparities in Community Learning Centres.
2. The study could enable the Department of Higher Education and Training to design gender-sensitive programmes in Community Learning Centres while existing policy on gender may be reviewed for the realisation of gender equality in higher education.

3. The information will act as a baseline through which all interested parties would execute studies of their own to change the situation or implement the recommendations from this study.
4. The findings will be made available in the University of South Africa library so that in future scholars can access and understand the problem of gender disparities from a critical perspective view, by considering the relevance in different contexts of the study, which in this case was set in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

1.5 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS USED IN THE STUDY

Colonialism: Colonialism is often narrowly defined. Some authors confine it to either a geographical area or an era. Others convinced that colonialism is a system that is no longer operative in Africa and generally in the world. Quijano (2000) offers a fascinating analysis on colonized ways of knowing, behaving and being. Valuable contributions include the use of concepts such as coloniality, coloniality of power and colonial difference. These concepts not only speak to economic and political consequences of colonialism, but also to Eurocentric epistemology, ontology and ideology evolving from supporting and validating European monopoly of power. Hegemonic knowledge distorted truth and deformed being of the colonized. The former refers to the political and economic relations by which one nation dominates and exploits.

Community College: The term “Community College” has different meanings in different countries, but it is generally understood as a comprehensive post-school institution that are accessible to local people and offer variable mixes of four types. Namely, vocational education that includes technical and vocational education providing formal qualifications at various levels and work related courses organized by employers or training organization. Non-vocational education which entails general and school equivalency, Adult and community education courses are usually based on voluntary participants’ own learning interest and needs for personal and social growth and with no certification and are often organised by non governmental community based organization (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013).

Emancipation of women: The process of setting women free from legal, social and political restrictions.

It is an effort to ensure equal rights for women and remove gender discrimination (Kincheloe in Cohen et al., 2000:29). The emancipation of women is not about subordination of one to another. Emancipation gives everybody the possibility and freedom to choose. In this regard, women and men make choices about their future, jobs and time. The shared fulfilment of household duties is also about emancipation.

Empowerment: Empowerment is not an easy concept to define, many field-related definitions emerged in the process of seeking to conceptualise empowerment with reference to relevant literature. For example, Cattaneo and Chapman (2010:647) define empowerment as a process that “increases one’s personal, interpersonal or political power to enable the individual to take action to improve their own life situations”. In the field of psychology, empowerment is defined as “a sense of personal control and freedom which allows people to become their own agents and masters regarding those issues that concern them and how this is supported by having access and control to resources” (Zimmerman, in Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010: 648). Mosedale (2005: 243) points out that empowerment are based on certain assumptions. First, it is people who are considered disempowered who can be empowered and empowerment is not something that can be given but has to be achieved by the women themselves. As for the outcomes, Mosedale (2005:244) notes, “it is often assumed that empowerment will result in women being able to take part in decision-making on issues that concern them in the family or in society”. Mosedale makes the further point that “there is no final state of total empowerment but it is always relative, in time and in space. However, it depends on how women perceive their possibilities for choice in particular contexts.

Feminism: Narayan (2004:215) defines feminism as a collection of political movements, social movements and ideologies that defend the political, social, sexual, cultural and economic rights of women. In its most simplistic and frequently cited terms, feminism is about achieving equality between men and women. Digging a little deeper into the field of Western feminist theory, it becomes clear that the true intention of feminist theory is to expand options available to both sexes while eliminating gender stratification within cultures. What is common to the feminists is that they all act, speak, write and advocate on women’s issues, rights and identify injustices to females in the social status quo.

Gender: Confusion associated with the terms sex and gender has decreased. For example, in sociology, Haralambos and Holborn (2008) attest that the terms sex and gender are now fairly standardized to refer to different content areas. Sex refers to the biological characteristics distinguishing male and female. This definition emphasises male and female differences in chromosomes, anatomy, hormones, reproductive systems, and other physiological components. Lindsey (2005:4) notes that “gender refers to those social, cultural and psychological traits linked to males and females through particular social contexts. Sex makes us increasingly male or female. It is recognized not as simple as this-that is, not just a binary but about the gender hierarchy in other words. Pyburn (2004) notes that, the recent critiques argue that in creating rigid dichotomies we are projecting our own cultural conceptions of gender into the past rather than extracting new understandings from the archaeological record imposed by men to ensure their dominance over women. Gender binary was established in order to justify the subordination of women. Gender makes us masculine or feminine. Sex is an ascribed status because a person is born with it, but gender is an achieved status because it must be learned”. In this regard women become constituted as if they are a coherent group: sexual differences become synonymous with female subordination because power is automatically defined in binary terms. That implies ‘men’ become categorised as separate from ‘women’ as a category and higher status is afforded to men as a group (Lindsey, 2005:05). In contrary, Oyewuni (2002) notes that, to best understand the conception of gender in Africa, one has to understand the African worldview, the highest value of life where it lies in the interpersonal relationships between humans, hence there is oneness between humans and nature.

Gender disparity: According to UNESCO (2004), gender disparity refers to the differences in outcomes observed between different sexes. Specifically, gender disparities allude to one sex being disadvantaged over the other in experiences and outcomes. Examples of gender disparities include the gender gap in terms of income, lack of access to quality education, access to resources and involvement in decision-making. Gender disparities in education can also include a difference in the quality of education received. In most societies gender disparities in education may be perpetuated by policy, culture, patriarchal ideologies and issues of power relations.

Gender roles: These are expected behaviours and particularly are sex-typed behaviours (Eagly, Beall & Sternberg 2004). Gender-ascribed roles define the ideal expected behaviours for men and women in any position they occupy in society or in any activity, overlapping with other expected role behaviour. In other words, gender roles define what is deemed appropriate for women and men and define what attributes men and women should have and display in any situation. As such, gender roles are norms that women and men comply with all the time, whether in the private or public spheres. They permeate daily life and are the basis of self-regulation, hence affecting individual agency. Gender specific roles therefore are often conditioned by household structure, access to resources, specific impacts of the global economy, occurrence of conflict or disaster, and other locally relevant factors. Like definitions of gender, gender roles can evolve over time, in particular through the empowerment of women and transformation of masculinities (Lindsey, 2005: 407).

Gender stereotypes: Roles and attributes attached to men and women due to cultural orientation which assign roles and attributes determined by people's sex. Sex stereotyping can limit the development of the natural talents and abilities of boys and girls, women and men, their educational and professional experiences as well as life opportunities in general. Stereotypes about women therefore result from and are the causes of deeply engrained attitudes, values, norms and prejudices against women. Lindsey (2005:147) notes that these views tend to justify and preserve the historical relations of power of men over women as well as sexist attitudes which are holding back the advancement of women.

Gender equality: In a state of gender equality, woman and men, boys and girls have equal conditions for realising their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefitting from, economic, social, cultural and political development (UNESCO, 2004). Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women

Gender equity: Is a problematic term as it may inspire legislation that further encourages a person to fill a predetermined gender- defined role, and perpetuate gender inequality. “To ensure fairness, measures often are put in place to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from operating on a level playing field”. The concept recognizes that women and men have different needs and power and these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the imbalance between the sexes. (UNESCO, 2004).

Gender relations: Gender relations are social relations between men and women conceived as social groups in a particular community (UNESCO, 2004). The relations include how power and access to and control over resources are distributed between the sexes. Gender relations intersect with all other influences on social relations, for example, age, ethnicity, race, religion to determine the position and standing of people in definite contexts. Since gender relations are a social construct, that is, they are constructed by people who draw on the gender categorisations; they can be transformed over time to become more equitable.

Gender sensitization: Raising awareness of gender equality concerns. Khandelwal (2016) notes that gender sensitivity is often used to mean the same thing as gender awareness. However, in most cases, the term is regarded as the beginning of gender awareness which is more analytical and critical. Gender sensitisation challenges gender disparities and encourages people to take action and address issues of gender. The aim is to make people aware of the power relations between men and women in society and to see the significance of providing women and men equally the right set of circumstances and treatment. Rajshree (2016:208) also claims that gender-sensitization theories claim that the modification of the behaviour of teachers and parents towards their children can have a casual effect on gender equality; and they suggest that teachers and parents should be sensitized to this

Language: In the context of colonialism and post-colonialism, language has often become a site for both colonization and resistance. In particular, a return to the original indigenous language is often advocated since the language was suppressed by colonizing forces. The use of European languages is a much debated issue among postcolonial authors (Bhabha in McLeod, 2000; Ndimande, 2012).

Other: The social and/or psychological ways in which one group excludes or marginalises another group. By declaring someone “other”, person tend to stress what makes them dissimilar from or opposite of another, and this carries over into the way they represent others, especially through stereotypical images (Bhabha in Mcleod, 2010).

Power: Lukes sustains that power is one of the contested concepts which is unavoidably value-dependent, that is, “both its definition and any given use of it, once defined, are completely tied to a given set of (probably unacknowledged) value-assumptions which predetermine the range of its empirical application” (Lukes, 2005: 30). For the scholar, using this concept involves disputes about its proper employment: “Indeed, to engage in such disputes is itself to engage in politics” (Lukes, 2005: 30). The basic common core to any mention of power in the analysis of social relationships is the notion that A in some way affects B in a significant manner. The three views are alternative interpretations and applications of the same underlying concept of power, according to which A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B’s interests. In the new edition, Lukes (2005) expands the concept of power, which is a capacity rather than the exercise of that capacity. Power can be held even where it is not used or needed. The notion of interest is also a very evaluative notion and each view of power rests on a different conception of interest. Lukes features three views of power. Namely, the pluralist view (which he calls the one-dimensional view); the view of critics of pluralism (which he calls the two-dimensional view); and the third view of power (which he calls the three-dimensional view). Lukes argues that, the first two views of power are inadequate, claiming that the three-dimensional view offers a better means for the investigation of power relations. According to Lukes (2005), the two-dimension view is limited and focuses only on observable conflicts, whether overt or covert. Another criticism as Lukes notes is that, this view is too committed to behaviouralism, that is the study of concrete decisions, whereas in action can also be the outcome of socially structured and culturally patterned collective behavior. Lukes (2005) therefore maintains that it is crucial to investigate what he calls the third dimensional of power - the power to prevent the formation of grievances by shaping perceptions, cognitions and preferences to ensure the acceptance of a certain role in the existing power.

Power relations: A critical perspective understands different kinds of power. For example, Marxism stresses the importance of economic power, while pluralism stresses ideological power in democracies. The state-centred perspective emphasises political power (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Mann's approach (in Haralambos & Holborn, 2008:559) argues that any complete theory must embrace all these, including military power. Foucault (in Haralambos & Holborn, 2008:559) describes power as something that is shaped through known systems of knowledge. In other words, the concepts of truth are not neutral and are often created by powerful groups. This is reinforced through the education system, the media and other ways of disseminating beliefs. In other words, one explanation is that how we understand power is determined by the political and the theoretical interest that we bring to the study of power. For example, democratic theorists are interested in different things when they study power than social movements' theorists or post-colonial theorists (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008).

Patriarchy: Lindsey (2005) notes that patriarchy includes male dominated social structures leading to the oppression of women. "Patriarchy, by definition, exhibits male-centred norms operating throughout all social institutions that become the standard to which all persons adhere" (Lindsey, 2005:05). For example, everywhere in the world there are perceptions about a woman's biological inappropriateness for other than domestic roles which have controlled chances for education. These conditions have made men the custodian of what has been scripted, publicised, and explained about gender and the positioning of men and women in our culture. In short, patriarchy refers to male-female relationships which disadvantage women in myriads of ways.

Post-colonial: This term is highly contested (Chilisa, 2012:12). "Some read the "post" to mean colonialism came to an end, whereas others perceived the term to include all indigenous people that experienced struggle and resisted suppression of their ways of knowing" (Chilisa, 2012: 12). She notes that via this theoretical position, "a space is advocated for where those who suffered European colonial rule and slavery, the disenfranchised and disposed, can reclaim their languages, cultures and see with their own eyes the history of colonialism, imperialism and the new form" (Chilisa, 2012:12). Similarly, Langa (2008:193) notes that, the Postcolonial encompassing an array of matters that include issues such as identity, gender, race, racism and ethnicity.

Post Colonial also focuses on exploring knowledge systems underpinning colonialism, neocolonialism and various forms of oppression and exploitation present today. It questions the undervaluing, destruction, and appropriation of colonized people's knowledge and ways of knowing, including the colonisers use of that knowledge and ways of knowing against them to serve the colonisers interests. Post colonial theory therefore offers a critique of imperial knowledge systems and languages and how they are circulated and legitimated and serve imperial interest.

Rural: The Rural Development Framework (RDF) defines 'rural' as the sparsely inhabited areas where people engage in farming or rely on natural resources, including the villages and small towns scattered across these areas. Rural clusters found in the former homelands such as those of Ciskei and Transkei are also taken into account in the definition. In the rural areas of the Eastern Cape, unemployment, poverty and gender disparities have always been a major problem. Many past inequalities still exist and it is the rural women in particular who still bear the brunt of these inequalities, especially those residing in the Eastern Cape of South Africa (Statistics SA, 2000b).

Social justice: Scholars have very different understandings of the concept and how useful it is. For example, Freire (1970:02) speaks of the "liberation of the oppressed", while Evans (2008:04) describes social justice in education as emancipation from domination and Kincheloe (2008:11) refers to the "alleviation of human suffering". Gewirtz and Cribb (2002) reject the liberal view of social justice, linked to the affording of equal opportunity and argue for an acceptance of the plurality of the notion of social justice, which includes but also extends beyond distributive justice, that is, equality of outcomes. For the purpose of this study, social justice will be defined as a normative concept centered on the principles of fairness, equality, equity, rights and participation.

Socialisation: Lifelong learning of patterns of behaviour at certain age levels. In this regard, the family is usually regarded as the initial stage where the child gets the necessary skills to suit into society, especially language learning and approval behaviour. For example, women learn early what masculinity are and what roles are suitable for men and women in society. "Once these roles are mastered; they become a norm and guide how girls and boys should behave in adulthood...not only does socialisation shape our personalities and allow us to develop our human potential, but the process also moulds our beliefs and behaviours about all social groups and the individuals making up of those groups" (Mazile in Adeyemi, 2000).

We can therefore argue that what it means to be female or male is for the most part determined by the socialization process. The socialization process is thus, imparted to individuals through a number of socializing agents present in a given society. In most African societies these agents include; the home and family, ceremonies, play activities, religious settings, traditional institutions.

The hidden curriculum: The hidden curriculum is quite complex to define because it is based on the assumption that students learn lessons in school that may or may not be part of the formal course of study. For example, school rules, codes of discipline and learning organisation present the teachers and students to incontestable and hidden facets (Mazile in Adeyemi, 2000). McLaren (2003:86) notes that, critical research into the hidden curriculum aims at dealing with how schools operate to reflect different inequalities in humanity, with an outlook of constituting changes. Critical research also recognises that “official’ or formal curriculum documents of schools embrace notions to those hidden or unintended outcomes of schooling which bring about social injustices.

Public Adult Learning Centre: Public Adult Learning Centre is a term used in the adult education system. There has been a move from Public Adult Learning Centres to Adult Learning Centres and then presently Community Learning Centres (CLCs). The Department of Higher Education and Training articulated the change of name from Public Learning Centres to Community Learning Centres from April 2015.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem on which this study focuses is that Community Learning Centres in being tasked to promote equity and redress, do not in their present form seem to help people to mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Emerging literature in South Africa has indicated that some of the enacted policies have brought about meaningful change in adult learning. Seemingly, equity in terms of student demographics appears to be on course. Substantive changes have occurred in the representation of women in higher learning and adult learning, in particular black women (Akala & Divala, 2016; Badat, 2009). This difference seems to make a strong case for success and achievement of transformation policies. However, what is under contention is the idea that numbers do not tell the whole story about women’s experiences in social institutions.

Women in adult learning are still faced with many challenges, of which gender inequality is one (Badat, 2009; CHE, 2010).

In the Eastern Cape women's experiences of gender disparities is affected by their race, class, geographical location and other factors. The Eastern Cape Province constitutes one of the most depressed and poorest regions with widespread poverty. The province is also characterized by a comparatively large rural population reflecting a skewed female/male ratio in favour of females due to a large-scale outmigration of adult males seeking work in urban areas both within and outside the province. Unemployment of females and lack of access to social infrastructure and services in many areas have also widened the gender disparities (Ekar, 2005). Paramount in explaining gender inequality is the legacy of apartheid. Apartheid capitalism profited through the large numbers of African women working for lower wages than their male counterparts. In the Xhosa culture, there is a significant power differential between men and women brought about as a result of unequal access to economic and social resources and gendered divisions of labour in the household, extending to other institutions sites, an skewed in favour of males (Ekar, 2005). This phenomenon has been supported by social and cultural systems that posit control by males. Males are expected to initiate relationships and sexual assertiveness in women is often stigmatized. The gender power differential is compounded by age differences. Women typically marry or have sex with older men who have long been sexually active. Such a perception undermines womanhood as they are regarded as inferior to men (Mtuzze, 2004). Moreover, unequal rights to own land or apply for credit deprive women of their resources for their livelihood and for security in old age, leaving them more dependent on male relatives. The wider gender disparities in schooling meanwhile produce correspondingly different abilities for women and men to acquire and process information and to communicate. The gender imbalance in resources and power also has consequences for the relative autonomy of women and men and their influence in household decision-making (World Bank, 2001).

The Constitution of South Africa has declared that all citizens must receive basic education including adult education and also to further education with the state through reasonable measures that must be progressively available and accessible (Republic of South Africa, 1996:06).

Without effective strategies that could be employed to assist people in mitigating gender disparities in their daily lives, there is a need to suggest strategies or possible roles that could be employed by the Community Learning Centres to assist people mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

1.5.1 Research questions

The main/ Critical question of the study is to investigate the role played by the Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. In addressing this problem, the following questions were posed:

- 1 What are the common factors that perpetuate experiences of gender disparities in the Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape?
- 2 How are gender disparities experienced as impacting on the socio-economic development of women in the Community Learning Centres in Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape?
- 3 What possible strategies can be initiated to Community Learning Centres to assist people (men and women) to mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape?

1.5.2 Aims and objectives of this study

In addressing this problem, the present study seeks to explore the common factors that perpetuate gender disparities and how these instances impact on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Furthermore, this study is an attempt to recommend possible ways in which community Learning Centres could assist people in mitigating gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Understanding why women do not participate fully in the socio-economic development of their communities and the society at large is crucial for assisting community Learning Centres to come up with new strategies for formulating new programmes that will address the needs and interests of women with the intention of improving their situation. Such educational strategies in community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape should be characterised by fairness, equality and the values embedded in social justice when it comes to the role of women in society.

1.5.3 Specific objectives of this study

1. To explore common factors that perpetuate experiences of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape with special reference to their perceptions;
2. To explain how gender disparities are experienced as impacting on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape;
3. To recommend possible ways in which the community Learning Centres could assist people (men and women) in mitigating gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) explain that a research design is controlled by the strength of purpose. In other words, a research design acts as a bridge between the theoretical discussion of the opening chapter and the subsequent chapters that cover specific styles of research, specific for planning a research design, such as, sampling, trustworthiness and ethics (Cohen et al., 2000:73). Similarly, McMillan and Schumacher (2001:166) define a research design as a plan for selecting the methodology and research methods to respond to the research questions.

As will be seen as the discussion proceeds (and especially in Chapter 3), the plan that was developed for this study became emergent and made room for some flexibility in order to be responsive to the context of the research. For example, I had not initially planned to facilitate additional focus group discussions with the same groups of people a second time (that is, on a second occasion with the same participants) but at some point during the analysis, it became evident that more information was needed to lend richness to the data and to fill gaps or area for which missing or inadequate information limits the ability of reviews to reach conclusions for a given topic. Hence, the plan evolved to consider this and a set of interviews with adult educators and second set of focus groups (with mixed groups and homogenous groups) was arranged.

1.6.1 Phenomenology

This study followed the phenomenological research design. A phenomenological research design is a study that attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). The purpose is to examine uniqueness of individual's lived situations because each person experiences his or her own reality and reality as subjective. It is also understood that reality is constituted as people interact with each other in social life and hence reality is *intersubjective*. Phenomenology has its roots in an existentialist philosophy. Driven by the research aim that intends to explore how Community Learning Centres could help people to mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape, this study adopted a phenomenological research design to focus on the experiences of adult learners and adult educators.

Adopting phenomenological research design meant that insights about experiences of women with regard to gender disparities in a patriarchal world can naturally be extended to include where they are constantly taught to be and regarded as second-class citizens. In other words, a phenomenological approach might change how women perceive their freedom as they begin to discuss this through the research process. Further, phenomenological methods are particularly effective at illustrating the individual experiences and perceptions and in so doing able to challenge structural discrimination. Moreover, men's views can also be elicited in the process (as was done during the mixed focus groups with male and female adult learners in the two selected Community Learning Centres).

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was grounded by feminism. Feminism is a collection of political movements, social movements and ideologies that defend the political, social, sexual, cultural and economic rights of women. In its most simplistic and frequently cited terms, feminism is about achieving equality between men and women. When we dig a little deeper into the field of Western feminist theory, it becomes clear that the intention of feminist theory is to expand options available to women while eliminating gender stratification within society.

Feminist theories contend that women should be able to develop themselves as individuals and to express their interests in any way they choose, laws and cultural norms that limits any person's ability to pursue their own interests such as regulations that limit women's income, educational or job opportunities should be disputed and ultimately corrected. (Narayan, 2004:215).

1.8 RESEARCH PARADIGM

This study is undergirded by the post-colonial indigenous paradigm. Post-colonial indigenous paradigm can be conceptualized as a "family of theories sharing a social, political and moral concern about the history and legacy of colonialism and how it continues to shape people's lives, wellbeing and life opportunities" (Young, 2001). It does not pretend value-freedom in its way of approaching the research enterprise.

Post-colonial theories have attempted to critically analyse the ideologies of Western culture, at the same time to advance our understanding of how "race", "racialisation" and "culture" are constructed in different areas including in current neo-colonial contexts and how this intersects with class and gender categorisations affecting people's life chances. The notion of 'post' in post-colonial does not imply that we have moved past or beyond inequitable social and power relations but that new configurations of inequalities are exerting their distinctive effects (Anderson, 2010).

In explaining and applying its philosophies in post-colonial times, the post-colonial indigenous paradigm aims at re-describing and re-interpreting developments and events related to colonisation and its effects. For example, in the present study it is clear that the context of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa went hand in hand with inequalities in the education system, which left many adults functionally illiterate in terms of reading and writing (McKay, 2007). Community Learning Centres were set up to redress this but this study is aimed at considering critically the role of the Centres in possibly mitigating gender disparities (with special reference to the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape). In terms of epistemology, post-colonial paradigms signify an epistemological shift (Tickly, in Chilisa, 2012).

Researchers who follow the post-colonial indigenous paradigm are guided by relational accountability, as developed in interactions between researchers and participants during the research process.

This promotes respect, representation of indigenous views, reciprocity between researchers and the participants so that each feel they are gaining from the study. The nature of knowledge is relational in the sense that it is generated in the encounters between researchers and participants and the indigenous knowledge system is built on relations (Smith, 1999, in Chilisa, 2012). Relational accountability also extends to fair reporting (representation) of participant perspectives (Chilisa, 2012:06).

1.9 RESEARCH METHODS

For the present study, a variety of methods of data collection was used to achieve a better understanding of the participants' perspectives and to increase the credibility of the findings. As stated above in the research design, I employed a phenomenological research design as an attempt to explore with participants their perceptions, perspectives and understandings of a particular phenomenon, in this case, gender disparities experienced and the impacts of this on socio-economic development and the role of Community learning centres in possibly mitigating gender disparities as experienced by the adult learners in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape (Creswell, 2013).

1.9.1 Interviews

One important way of understanding people's lives is to understand them through the eyes and voices of the prominent people in their lives. These are the people who have insights through knowing the adult learners, namely, adult educators. Interviews were conducted with three adult educators at their convenience. What characterises the interviews presented in this research is the depth of the conversation, which moved beyond surface to a rich discussion of thoughts and feelings. Several features of the qualitative interviewing situation made this possible. The interviews with the adult educators were conducted on two occasions (with each one of the three) and were about one hour in length, allowing for prolonged engagement with the interviewee. This period allowed me to establish rapport with the interviewee and to foster a climate of trust. As in many studies where the interviewees are interviewed more than once, I pursued topics that emerged as important from preliminary data analysis in subsequent interviews. This study proceeded likewise and hence was emergent (Lincoln & Guba, 2003).

This kind of persistent involvement with the interviewee makes it more likely that the researcher will come to understand at a deeper level their perceptions related to the phenomenon under study (Lincoln & Guba, 2003; Gray, 2009:370).

1.9.2 Focus group interviews

The other method that was used to collect data from the participants in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape was the focus group interview. Berg (2009:167) describes focus groups as interviews designed for small groups of individuals put together by the researcher. Because interactions between group members largely replace the usual interaction between interviewer and subject, greater emphasis is given to the subjects' perceptions in focus group discussion. This study used focus group discussions to yield rich, thick data from the participants in the study. In addition, it allowed participants to learn from one another and to explore ideas together as they heard and responded to their perspectives.

This fits in with indigenous views on knowing as relational (Romm, 2015). The focus group discussion centred on adult learners' day-to-day experiences pertaining to their interpretation of gender disparities as well as their knowledge, attitudes and beliefs on the role of Department of Higher Education in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Four groups participated in this study: two groups consisted of men and women and two consisted of women only. I made use of focus group discussions where my role was to facilitate interaction in the group of adult learners who had similar knowledge with regard to the role of Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. During the focus group discussions, participants were given a chance to interact with each other so that their views on the role of Public Adult Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape could emerge. The questions prearranged by me were not fixed or static but acted as a guide during the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

1.10 SAMPLE

I conducted my research with 24 adult learners and three adult educators currently facilitating in Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. When conducting research many types of sampling are possible.

However, researchers who follow qualitative research usually focus on relatively small samples (Neuman, 2007: 141). In this case two Community learning Centres (one rural and one urban) were purposively sampled from the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Briefly put, it was considered that these centres could provide some understanding from across urban and rural contexts of experience.

That is, it was deemed important to sample participants who represent, to some degree, the experiences of those in the population of interest who have not been sampled in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Their voices were regarded as in some way also “representing” the voices of those from other centres, although it is not possible to say to what extent this was the case as noted in the limitations of the study outlined in Chapter 5. Onwuegbuzie and Leech also note (2007: 400) that if one uses sufficient words or expressions from particular participants, this also lends “quality” to the sampling process. Hence it was important to spend prolonged time with participants. The participants in this study (adult educators and adult learners) were selected because they were considered able to provide rich descriptions of their experiences and to reflect on them in the context of the research. Adult educators from the centres were selected as they have rich experiences of the curriculum and its implementation.

Adult learners attending the classes in the two chosen Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape were selected to hear their perspectives. All participants had completed Grade 9 and were now in Grades 10, 11 and 12. The process of selecting participants from these grades was based on their volunteering to take part in the study, after I had approached the centres and asked to speak to educators and learners. This can be considered as what Kovach (2009:126) calls relational sampling, in that it was not only in my hands to select participants. It was also their choice, which is why in this case volunteering was relied upon. In the rural centre, there were two adult educators, and three in the urban centre, of which three were interviewed on two separate occasions. There were 35 adult learners in Grade 10, 11 and 12, of whom 24 participated in focus group discussions.

DATA COLLECTION

To gain access to the population of the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape, formal letters were written to the director of the Department of Higher Education and Training requesting permission to conduct interviews and focus group discussions. Adult managers were also contacted to help choose individuals for the focus groups and interviews. It is a requirement according to law, for every researcher seeking to do research in South Africa or about South Africa to ask for permission from the Department of Higher Education and Training before they engage in the research process. The director indicated her willingness to cooperate, with regard to conducting of interviews and the focus group interviews. My application for informed consent was also granted by the UNISA College of Education, after which I was able to contact adult facilitators and adult learners. The letters explained the aims and purpose of the research. During this process of data collection participants were informed about all important aspects concerning the research before they decided to participate.

Written consent of the participants was sought, the eligible participants were approached in person and appointments were made in advance with the participants who agreed to be interviewed or to be part of the focus group. The participants were briefed about the study; during the briefing session, they were assured that their responses would be held in strict confidence and that they could withdraw from the research project at any time if they felt uncomfortable. Thus, I did not disturb the daily activities of the adult centres. Further, data were collected in places where the participants felt free to express their views and opinions without being intimidated. Private classrooms were used for focus groups and the adult facilitators used their classrooms for interviews. In the focus group discussions, I encouraged the inputs of all participants and asked them to add to one another's views and feelings.

Some participants indicated that they were uncomfortable in a group consisting of both men and women and were given an option to be interviewed in a women-only focus group. Moreover, two adult educators felt that they did not want to be recorded and this was taken into account. Notes were taken during the session after the participants confirmed that they had read and understood the consent form that was given to them for their attention. I recorded the time and the date of the version of the consent form used in order to document the consent date. The participants were then asked if they were willing to participate under such conditions and sign the concern forms.

Once the participants had volunteered, they were then provided with time slots and locations for the focus group interviews. In all the interviews, a semi-structured guide was used in implementing the procedures followed in the interview. All the focus group discussions were tape recorded. After the discussions were conducted, the data were transcribed verbatim. Everything the participants had said was written down apart from what was said off the record. This involved a straight transcription of all utterances, with added symbols to capture extra-linguistic information such as pauses, hesitations, stressed words and emotions.

1.11 DATA ANALYSIS

Cohen et al. (2000:77) attest that data analysis is a rigorous process which involves organising, accounting for, and explaining the data. This means making sense of the data in terms of participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities. In qualitative research, therefore, data collection, analysis and recording operate as interrelated procedures that are ongoing, rather than as isolated incidents (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:155). I employed thematic analysis because it is used to explore the understanding of an issue and to synthesise participants' perspectives. Gibson and Brown (2009:126) maintain that thematic analysis refers to the process of analysing data according to commonalities, relationships and differences across data sets. Themes were identified focusing on the way they had been presented as well as the frequency of their occurrences. I familiarised myself with the data and this entailed reading and re-reading collected data. To make sense of the participants' words, I went through the data looking for the information to answer the research questions and labelled the relevant responses accordingly.

1.12 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness can be defined as the credibility of the researcher's conclusions. In other words, it confirms that the researcher has followed the layout, conclusions and the recording of the results to build credibility (Guba, 1981:80). According to Polit and Beck (2011), four elements comprise the original trustworthiness framework, namely: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

1.12.1 Credibility

Holloway and Wheeler (2010:338) and Macnee and McCabe (2008:424) define credibility as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings. Credibility also establishes whether the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants' original data, and is a correct interpretation of the participants' original views. I spent extended time in the field to improve the trust of the participants and to provide a greater understanding of their culture and context (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007:238).

The second strategy that I adopted was member checks. Member checks mean that the "data and interpretations are continuously tested as they are derived from members of various audiences and groups from which data are solicited" (Guba, 1981:85). Following from this, data analysis teams, consisting of the adult learners, were formed with each team analysing the views of the participants in focus group discussions. Teams met twice to analyse their group's transcripts and then all the four teams met to identify common themes. In semi-structured interviews, after the interviews, each participant reviewed the transcribed interviews or discussions to check for the accuracy of the results. The third approach that I used was triangulation. Triangulation "involves the use of multiple and different methods, investigators sources and theories to obtain corroborating evidence" (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007: 239). In this study, different methods were used, that is, the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used to get the views of adult facilitators and adult learners on the role of Department of Higher Education and Training in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

1.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:15) point out that since educational research typically involves human subjects, researchers are required to protect the rights and welfare of the subjects who participate in the study. These authors further point out that many institutions have guidelines for protecting the rights of subjects participating in research studies overseen by these institutions. In this study, I followed ethical guidelines, as specified by the ethics research committee of the University of South Africa.

This includes undergoing an ethics review process before engaging in semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to ensure that the procedures are fair and unbiased to all participants involved.

Creswell (2013) also notes that the literature on ethics emphasises the importance of guaranteeing confidentiality that represents an undertaking by researchers that any information supplied by participants is used with discretion and will not embarrass or harm them and they could choose to not participate or to be recorded. The aim of the study was provided in the covering letters indicating the need for taping and video recording the participants. Furthermore, the time needed for each focus group session was clearly defined and adhered to. I made the process of data collection open to all the participants to allow them to feel free in answering the questions and to contribute to the discussion. After the compilation of the research report, I visited the participants with a copy of the research report to confirm the results with the participants.

1.14 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: The first chapter of this thesis provides a general introduction to the study. The chapter also covers the background information of the study, the significance of the study, scope, the definition of key terms, the problem statement, research questions, aims, objectives, the research design and methodology as well as the research methods and limitations.

Chapter 2: The second chapter investigates scholarly and professional publications, both theoretical and empirical, that give direct support to or challenge the proposed focal area. Thus, in this chapter, the literature review will be both a descriptive summary of relevant texts and a critical evaluation of previous research and literature relating to the role of Community Learning Centres in assisting people to mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

Chapter 3: This chapter discusses the research design that was used to address the aim and objectives of the study with reference to methodological issues, research methods, and ethical considerations. A qualitative research approach and the phenomenological research design were chosen for this study. The paradigm deemed to be the most appropriate in undergirding this study is the post-colonial indigenous methodology.

Chapter 4: This chapter presents the findings of the study. The chapter involves the presentation of data gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Three objectives guided this study on the role of Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu District of the Eastern Cape. The first objective sought to examine the key factors that perpetuate gender disparities as experienced in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. The second objective discussed the experienced impact of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. The third objective looks at the strategies that can be employed by Community Learning Centres in assisting people to mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

Chapter 5: The final chapter discusses the research findings and recommendations in which Community Learning Centres can assist people to mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Lastly, the chapter provides suggestions for further studies regarding Community Learning Centres and the mitigation of gender disparities.

1.15 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an introductory orientation to the present study. It sketched the background to, and rationale and relevance of the study. The research problem on which this study focuses is that Community Learning Centres as tasked in terms of policy to promote equity and redress, in their present form may not be helping people to mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. The research design for the study was outlined in terms of the research methodology, approach and methods employed in the qualitative research.

In the next chapter, a literature review is presented on the theme of the study, namely, the role of Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. This will cover theoretical frameworks that have undergirded this research and the extant research conducted in developed and developing countries and in South Africa.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses what extant research that is relevant for examining the role of Community Learning Centres in assisting people to mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Related studies that can be seen to address the peoples's daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape with respect to gender issues have been conducted. However, these studies have not focused on the role of Community Learning Centres in assisting people to mitigate gender disparities. Also, some studies have been done on adult education more generally in South Africa and the Eastern Cape, but again as shown in this chapter, they do not focus on the role of Community Learning Centres in assisting people to mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. There is therefore a gap in the literature as far as this is concerned.

In light of the above, the presentation of this chapter and interpretations are therefore in line with the aims and the main questions posed in Chapter 1. This seeks to: review literature relevant to the role of Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities, and literature on policy on adult learning in South Africa, and also to review literature relevant to creating a theoretical framework that can undergird the study. The focus will be on developed and developing countries and specifically in context of South Africa including the Eastern Cape. The present study directs its attention to the following objectives

- 1 To explore common factors that perpetuate experiences of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape with special reference to their perceptions;
- 2 To explain how gender disparities are experienced as impacting on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape;
- 3 To recommend possible ways in which the Community Learning Centres could assist people (men and women) in mitigating gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

2.2 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA

The foundations of the present-day policy and practice of education in Africa are closely related to the political ideologies of the various countries as shown in their national policies on education. In democratic states, educational policy and practice reflect democratic principles. This is because as Higgs (2003) notes, education and practice in Africa including South Africa during the colonial era were identical with those of the colonial masters. With independence, African countries gradually identified the inadequacies of the type of Western education they had inherited and embarked on periodic review of their educational policies. Ramose (in, Higgs, 2003: 6) also notes that colonialism in Africa provided a framework for organized subjugation of the cultural, scientific and economic life of many of the continent. This subjugation therefore ignored indigenous knowledge systems and impacted on African people's way of seeing and acting in the world. African identity, to all intents and purposes, became an inverted mirror of Western Eurocentric identity (Higgs, 2003:06). With regard to gender, colonialism eroded the position of women. Women's invisibility in academic writing in the colonial period and later did much to cause their neglect in many development projects, which too often left women both poorer and more burdened than before. Women's inferior position was also perpetuated when colonial authorities incorporated traditional leaders into the governing systems and introduced customary law that formally instituted the inferiority of women to men (Isichei, 1997; Coetzee, 2001). This distortion was recognized and in part corrected, largely through the writings of feminist scholars

2.3 ADULT EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Post-apartheid Adult education in South Africa clearly stated its purpose of serving a variety of needs. The main aim was to provide good quality education to adult learners. For example, the Constitution of South Africa, Act of 108 of 1996 makes a strong case that "everyone has a right to basic education" including adult education (Republic of South Africa, 1996:6). At the same time social changes such as poverty, inequality and unemployment were seen to be on the increase. In this regard adult education was seen as an agent of social change.

Despite these intentions, the Green Paper for Post-school Education and Training under the Department of Higher Education and Training (2012:px) noted that the system continues to produce and reproduce gender, class, racial and other inequalities with regard to access to educational opportunities and success. Two disadvantaged groups are adults and young people who are outside the formal arena and have little access to first or second chance learning. Walters (2006) points out that adult education in South Africa is still commonly associated with either personal development for the middle classes, or literacy and basic education for the marginalised groups. Personal development on one hand is a lifelong process and it covers activities that improve awareness and identity. Personal development also enhances quality of life and contributes to the realisation of dreams and aspiration. Basic education on the other hand is an evolving programme of instruction that is intended to provide students with the opportunity to become respectful global citizens and to contribute to their economic wellbeing of their families and communities (Ladd, Bading, Hall & Howord, 2015).

Increasingly, as Von Kotze (2007) notes, the notion of learning for sustainable livelihoods is being identified as a helpful, more inclusive conceptual framework as women are among those most vulnerable to impacts of unsustainable practices and climate change. In addition, women often do not have independent income and land rights in many countries including South Africa, although they are at the heart of the household's nexus of water, food and energy and therefore they often know first about the challenges and potential solutions in these areas. Kabeer and Natali (2013) support this view and further point out that promoting gender equality or addressing issues of redress should be seen as the key to sustainable development. Increasingly, women's full participation is recognised as central to policy making. Certain aspects of gender equality, such as female education and women's share of employment, can have a positive impact on economic growth; all this impact is dependent on the nature of growth strategies, the structure of the economy, the sectoral composition of women's employment and labour market segregation, among other factors.

2.3.1 Adult education for democratic citizenship

Adult learning in South Africa is also embedded in the political, social, cultural and economic processes of society.

Its primary social purposes are to enhance possibilities for women and men to survive the harsh conditions in which they live; to develop skills for people in the formal and informal sectors for economic purposes; and to provide cultural and political education which encourages women and men to participate actively in society through cultural organisations, social movements, political parties and trade unions (Walters, 2006).

Aristotle (in Schoeman, 2006) once reflected that the citizens of a state should always be educated to suit the constitution of a state. Even though this assertion was made in the historic past, it still reflects the current trends and the indispensability of basic education in the entire African continent. Basic education is meant to produce citizens who are loyal to the state, hence, abiding by the constitution of the country and able to contribute to the development of the country. It should produce a good citizen although at times what people regard as a “good citizen is squarely subjective” (Burchell, 1993:19). The difference between citizenship and a citizen is that the former is considered by various authorities as a status or a feeling of belonging to a state, society or community. The latter refers to an individual who has been bestowed with the status or who has the strong feeling of membership of a country or society (Burchell, 1993:19). The goal of citizenship education, according to Olivier (2000:6), is being competent and responsible and participating in local, provincial and national civic and political life. Such participation requires the acquisition of a body of knowledge and understanding: the development of the intellectual and participatory skills; the development of certain dispositions or character traits: and a reasonable commitment to the fundamental values of principles of constitutional democracy.

From the above definitions on citizenship, it can be concluded that the term citizenship has been traditionally understood in relation to the rights and responsibilities of citizens within a given nation state (Richardson & Monro, 2012). This classic model of citizenship is associated with the work of Marshall (1964) who defined citizenship in terms of three stages or sets: civil, political and social rights.

2.3.1.1 *Civil rights*

This domain deals mainly with the Bill of Rights. In other words, granting civil rights to the citizens is a way of making them equal before the law (Marshall, 2009:149).

The South African Constitution states that everyone has the right to basic education and to further education from the state, through reasonable measures, and individuals rights to these be made must make available and accessible progressively (Republic of South Africa,1996:6). This implies that most countries grant common rights and freedoms to all its citizens in order to make them responsible. During the teaching and learning process, pupils, youth and adults are taught about the rights and freedoms including their responsibilities. In addition, they are taught the major values, norms, standards and traditions which are held supreme within the country. Prevention of political disorders and civil unrest can be made possible through various adult education strategies. A number of policies to promote democracy and peace have been proposed during the fifth international conference on adult education held in Hamburg in 1997. They intend to attain their objectives through strategies that promote an active civil society, reinforce gender democracy and help solve conflicts between different countries and groups.

2.3.1.2 Political rights

This refers to the teaching and learning of the political rights and duties in line with a country's political system (Heater, 2004:32). As such, the political domain instils in learners' political consciousness so that they can become politically active and take part in the democratic processes of their communities and countries (Marshall 2009:149). This enables the youth and adults to vote or be elected to public office as a way of being involved in the running of the affairs of their countries. This domain therefore legitimises and conscientises the citizens of a country to be politically active. The role of adult education in development is also not limited to the economic and social spheres. It is also a political dimension, that is, ideas are based on upon reason rather than observation and exist in our minds. There is a strong link between adult learning and democracy. For democracy to be achieved in adult education, masculine democratic discourses would need to be transformed for women to achieve full political integration.

2.3.1.3 Socio-economic rights

The idea of socio-economic rights relates to the relationship between the individual in society and the socio-economic activities in the particular society. Thus, social rights guarantee a certain quality of life and the wellbeing of citizens, for example, by providing access to the system of the welfare state (Roche, 2002:76).

This implies that the teaching and learning which informs this domain is based on making the youth and adults understand their roles, responsibilities and obligations as citizens of a country. As a result, adults tend to understand issues regarding the rights they have towards their economic well-being, social security and environmental protection. According to Roche (2002:76), adult education also plays a major role in social development. It is now widely admitted that growth will not reduce poverty unless poor people are able to actively participate in it. Such participation can become effective to a large extent through adult education. Indeed, the African population will need some kind of formal and non-formal education and training to be able to benefit from basic health care, including sexual and reproductive health services, the development of new medicines and thus be in a position to free themselves from diseases that devastate poor people such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria and other parasites.

The other traditional model of citizenship that has been characterised as the 'town hall' model, to include participation of citizens in civil society is associated with communitarianism. That is, the model emphasises the responsibility of the individual to the community, in contrast to the traditional liberal conception of citizens as autonomous individual where individuals can make choices. Advocates of civic republicanism see citizenship as communal, where citizens are people whose lives are interlinked through shared traditions and understanding that forms the basis for the pursuit of the 'common good' (Delanty, 2000).

However, feminist theory and research, have significantly transformed the theorising of citizenship to challenge the false universalism of the 'male stream'. This new view of citizenship has contributed to a more differentiated analysis of gender and citizenship in a multicultural context. According to Osler (2005) much of the literature and citizenship literature focus on rebalancing the masculinist bias in the traditional citizenship literature but as part of this, some literature deals directly with diverse masculinities. Further, feminist scholars in defining citizenship are particularly concerned with rights in terms of what women are entitled to. In fact, as Rian Voet states (in Osler 2000:51) all citizenship vocabularies relate citizenship to the rights that this status offers to citizens. However, citizenship rights, as Osler (2000:51) points out, are not all the rights one can possibly think of because there remains a key distinction between human rights and citizenship rights.

Human rights on one hand are basic entitlements, that is, what is due to any person as a human being, and what, as a human being, any person may be or do without hindrance. Citizenship rights on the other hand can be classified into formal and substantive rights of citizenship, where formal rights include civil and political rights and substantive rights consist of social and economic citizenship rights. Yet, as Elhorn (2001:7) maintains, gender-based constraints tend to make it difficult for women to implement their formal rights or to transform their formal rights into substantive rights, particularly within the currently dominant neo-liberal paradigm, which emphasises the responsibilities rather than the rights of citizenship.

Feminists also explain citizenship in relation with rights and duties as a dynamic process in which the two dimensions of status and practice interact with each other, linked through human agency. Citizenship is both a status that primarily involves rights granted to individuals and a practice that involves responsibilities in relation to the wider society. In this context, citizenship as participation is seen as an expression of human agency in the political arena; broadly, defined. An advantage of citizenship as rights from a feminist view is that it enables people to exercise their agency as citizens (Lister 2003, 4). Yuval-Davis (1999:5) also claims that a holistic definition of citizenship exceeds formal rights such as the right to carry a particular passport.

In the quote above, the rights discourse disregards intervening factors that would limit women's potential of exercising their rights. In the context of South Africa, an example would be where women are discouraged from trying to access positions of political power. Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2005) attest that several arguments exist for more women in politics. First, there is the argument of "injustice" since as women constitute half of the population; it would be fair that women hold half the seats at a national level. Second, women possess "different experience" suggesting that as women have different roles, they also have different experiences which should be reflected in politics at a national level. Third, women can represent women's interests as women and men have different and conflicting interests. Fourth, more women in politics would mean that they will serve as role models for other fellow women and girls. We can therefore conclude that national states have particular ways in which they shape their citizens. Different principles of distribution and recognition have been used to construct national education systems. Some countries have worked with egalitarian and socially inclusive principles in educating their citizens in a common school system.

Thus, Heater (2004:34) talks about socio-economic rights assimilating social, ethnic and cultural/religious differences. Other societies have segregated, stratified or differentiated the forms of education received by different groups of adults either positively in order to recognise differences or more negatively to exclude certain categories in society. In these ways education systems have played a key role in shaping future citizens.

2.4 ADULT EDUCATION FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

The concept of lifelong learning has many meanings used by a variety of actors. For example, Singh and Nayak (2005: v) view lifelong education as an important part of the scheme of development of an individual, a society, a state and a nation. Lifelong education answers the basic problems of education now and in the future. This is because it intends to aim at the whole, evolving human beings and at all his or her aspects throughout his or her lifetime. It does not only transcend the artificial barriers between academic and non-academic education, and the traditional distinction between conventional public education and adult education. Zepke (in Rata & Runcan, 2014: 8) also notes that lifelong learning occurs throughout life that is from birth until one dies. In terms of this type of learning, skills and knowledge are updated frequently through short courses, vocational training, seminars, conferences and workshops to enable individuals cope with the changes in knowledge.

UNESCO (2014:2) further points out the concept of 'lifelong learning' should be found in the integration of learning and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages and in all life contexts such as the home, school and community and the workplace. Lifelong learning should also occur through formal, non-formal and informal modalities which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands. Formal learning is typically provided by an education or training institution, structured in terms of objectives, learning time or learning support and it might lead to certification. In other words, Community learning centres should therefore offer non-formal education. It is however, structured in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support. Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective. Informal learning results from the daily life activities related to work, family or leisure.

It is not structured in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support and typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases it is non-intentional European commission (EC, 2001).

In South Africa, the Ministry of education (2001:28) believes that an important avenue for increasing the potential pool of recruits to higher learning is to recruit non-traditional students, for example, Workers, mature learners (in particular women) and people with certain abilities. The provision of higher education to these groups, beside from equity and redress imperatives is seen to play a significant role in addressing the shortage of high level skills in the short to medium term, especially as there is large potential pool of recruits. The ministry of education, therefore, emphasises that increasing women's access to higher education is an important policy goal in its own right, and should be approached as such, rather than regarded as an attempt to shore up failing enrolments.

However, the focus on lifelong learning of women calls for reappraisal of concepts such as women's ways of knowing. In this context, lifelong learning would be based on women's individual life experiences. In this process, (Bolenky in Diez, 2006) identified particular ways of knowing that women have cultivated and valued, ways of knowing, they argue, that women have suppressed and neglected according to the dominant intellectual ethos of our time. These ways of knowing though gender related are not gender-specific. Thus, whilst these ways of knowing might be held in common by women, they are also accessible to men.

According to ILO (2011) and McGivney (2001), studies have shown that the aims, motives and expectations of men and women in adult education are not similar. It appears that men more than women hope to get promotion or a raise through engaging in adult learning, whereas women have more personal expectations. These gender differences in expectations linked to the expectations of social position raise the question of training, content and form specific to higher education, but can also be questioned in reference to other adult education contexts, namely, non-formal and informal ones.

2.4.1 Lifelong learning for equity, equality and redress

During the apartheid era the system of higher education was profoundly inequitable (CHE in Higgs & Wyk, 2007:154).

It was only equitable in terms of enrolments, success rates, funding, resources made available, staffing and research outputs. In light of this as Higgs and Wyk (2007:154) point out, it obviously did not serve the human needs, interests and dignity of learners, and thus the need in post apartheid South Africa for equity and redress in relation to lifelong learning. Equity was the pre-eminent transformation demand during the first policy phase which lasted from the national education policy (NEPI) (in Higgs & Wyk, 2007:154) to the education White Paper 3 of 1997.

The terms equality and equity are often used interchangeably. However, they differ in important ways. Gender equality refers to equality between men and women and entails the concept that all human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their personal abilities and to make choices without the limitation set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles and prejudices. Gender equality also means that the different behaviour, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. It does not mean that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equity means fairness of treatment of women and men accordingly to their respective needs. This may include treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. Redress is a normative concept that centres on the principles of fairness, equality, equity, rights and participation (UN, 2009). In order to redress this legacy of apartheid, adult education programmes were situated, but it is not clear whether Community Learning Centres are contributing to mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

2.4.2 Lifelong learning and national qualification framework

In South Africa, lifelong education encompasses much more than adult education. It includes all bands, unit standards, learning areas and qualifications of the NQF. In the South Africa context, the unit standards associated with each level of a learning area determine the knowledge and skills that the learners should achieve by the end of a particular learning programme. Further, the ideology of social democracy is embraced through all learning programmes placed with the NQF to promote the values and attitudes contained within the manifesto on values of education (Department of Education, 2001a).

To date, the NQF has entered a new phase and is highlighting the importance of guidance and counselling for learners across the lifespan, recognition of prior learning, credit accumulation and transfer of credits, and research based approaches to learning and work. The NQF is helping to build communities of trust across all parts of the education and training system nationally. It is also working closely with counterparts internationally to enable the flow of people across national borders. However, for lifelong learning to succeed, there must be trust amongst providers, across sectors, across national borders to facilitate learners' successful access and progress both locally and globally. Further, lower and middle income countries do not have the rich institutional infrastructures of richer countries, therefore it can be said that South African NQF plays an important developmental role (Lugg, 2009).

Having discussed the policy on adult education and how it attempts to address issues of equity and redress, attention will be directed to reviewing policies on women's empowerment and how they try to address issues that confront women in their daily lives in South Africa.

2.5 STUDIES RELATED TO THE ROLE OF ADULT EDUCATION IN DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

This section examines the research that has been undertaken in the field of adult education in developing and developed countries.

Nwanza (2015) investigated the gender inequalities in rural development projects in Chongwe district, Zambia. The study used qualitative and quantitative data and the methods of collecting data included questionnaires and focus group discussions. The study suggested that the education system in Zambia is still characterized by inequalities between men and women at all levels with regard to enrolment figures, progress ratios among teachers/lecturers and learning achievement. This study therefore recommends that the government, its development partners and NGOs should make it mandatory to ensure that vulnerable communities, especially in rural areas are educated on the importance of girl's education. Advocacy must also be strengthened to ensure that pregnant girls return to school.

The study by Nambinga (2007) entitled “The role of adult basic education and training programmes in Omusati region in Namibia” set out to find out whether programmes offered in the region empowered women. The main goal of the study was to determine whether the adult education programmes offered in the Omusati region in Namibia led to the general development of women. The study adopted a qualitative type of research and was underpinned by learning theories such as andragogic, humanistic and developmental theories. The methods of data collection included interviews, observations and document analysis. The results from the study showed that adult basic education did not provide the relevant skills needed to develop female participants and contended that the programmes still concentrate on one dominant area, namely, reading and writing. The present study is broader than this, focusing on the confluence of factors that participants suggest have led to their experience of gender disparity and how this might be addressed in Community Learning Centres.

Hamilton and Ivane (2000) in their research entitled “Situated literacies” critique the education system that tends to focus on one approach, such as reading and writing. Accordingly, the two authors advocate for learning that expands what adults already know and not only offers the acquisition of basic knowledge. Therefore, adult basic education should expand the already existing knowledge of women and men in the learning environment and empower adult learners with the skills they may not have such as workplace skills. Again, the focus of the above mentioned study is on skills development, which is a different focus from the present study that focuses on the convergency of factors that participants suggest have led to their experience of gender disparity and how this might be addressed in community Learning Centres.

Kotsapas (2010) undertook a study on adult and women empowerment: “Exploring the contributions of a non-formal adult literacy programme to women’s empowerment in Aileu, Timor-Leste.” The aim of the thesis was to explore the contributions of non-formal adult literacy programmes to rural women’s empowerment in Aileu, Timor-Leste. The study employed a qualitative research design and was underpinned by a particular feminist standpoint, namely, modernisation and liberal feminism. To answer the research questions asked in the study, the study used semi-structured interviews, focus groups discussions, informal conversations and the use of secondary sources such as donor and government reports.

These methods were used in order to provide an opportunity for open discussion on the topic, and to learn how communities discuss these issues (Brockington & Sullivan, 2003:58). The research findings revealed that the motivation behind women's participation in a non-formal literacy programme (NFALP) was directly related to addressing their practical gender needs, rather than their strategic gender needs, which revolve around reproduction tasks, and unpaid productive work. The study also finds that the NFALP offers rural women who missed out on formal education another opportunity to achieve success in education, however, the heavy burden of women's traditional reproductive roles severely restricts their availability severely to attend NFALP regularly. In the present study, I explore the variety of issues that participants feel are restrictive and possibilities for mitigating gender disparities.

Dutt (2017) undertook a study on the role of adult literacy in transforming the lives of women in India: "Overcoming gender inequalities". The overall aim of the study was to examine the role of adult literacy in changing the lives of marginalised women in the Bhilwara district of Rajasthan and the Howrah district in West Bengal in India. Interpretive and constructive frameworks underpinned the study. The theories drew attention to the way gender inequalities are embedded in society and the social construct of aligned roles delegated to women and men are elaborated in these theories. In other words, they consider that certain roles are aligned to gender categorisation and this becomes restrictive. Using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, the study revealed that in Indian society, social norms such as those of power often prevent women from exercising their free choice and from taking full and equal advantage of opportunities for individual development. My present study also looks at the broader context of norms in the Cacadu district and considers how participants' discourse as presented in interviews and focus groups refers to these norms and possibilities for challenging them.

The transformative role of adult basic education is therefore invaluable for women to become change agents. Patriarchy exhibits androcentric qualities, that is, male-centred norms operate throughout all social institutions as the standard to which all persons must adhere. Patriarchy and masculinity combine to perpetuate beliefs that gender roles are biologically determined and therefore unalterable.

For example, throughout the developed and developing countries, the beliefs about women's biological unsuitability for other than domestic roles have restricted opportunities for education. According to Lindsey (2005:3), these restrictions have "made men the guardians of what has been written, disseminated, and interpreted regarding gender and the placement of men and women in society". This perspective has also perpetuated the belief that patriarchy is an inevitable, inescapable fact of history, so struggles for gender equality are doomed to failure (Lindsey, 2005:3). The present study looks more closely at the ways in which participants interpret the operation of patriarchy and possibility for challenge thereof.

The study by Wanja (2012) focused on gender disparities in adult education classes. The research was carried out in Magumoni Division of Meru-South District, Eastern Province in Kenya. Its purpose was to examine the determinants of gender disparities in adult literacy classes. The study adopted a simple random survey design to collect accurate data through the use of questionnaires and interview schedules. The research was conducted using an ex-post-facto research design which is mainly used when data is being classified by major sub-groups of the population. Out of that target population the actual response was 64 respondents representing 84% of the sample. In addition, four adult education centres were sampled and their teachers were also interviewed to support the information obtained from the respondents. The major findings of the study were that gender-based discrimination in adult literacy classes was mainly due to poor government policies, bad learning environment, unequipped teachers, environment and general lack of support across the board.

2.5.1 Studies related on the role of adult education in mitigating gender disparities in South Africa

The study by Shilubane (2007) focused on the importance and benefits of adult learning programmes to the empowerment of black rural women in the Mopani district municipality, in greater Giyani, in Limpopo Province, South Africa. A qualitative approach was employed where participants were involved in focus groups and individual interviews. The study followed a holistic approach. The results of the study indicated that adult education programmes have empowered women to a certain extent because they have gained functional skills and they involve themselves in community development programmes.

However, the engagement of all stakeholders in the provision of quality adult learning programme can emancipate rural women so that they may take their rightful places in society.

Similarly, Beauzac (2010) wanted to establish whether there was a relationship between adult education, literacy programme and changes in women's lives in Cape Town. The study followed the ethnographic approach and data were collected by means of classroom observations, in-depth interviews and document analysis used. The study revealed that there were few gaps between the programme's vision and practices. The uses of the programme enabled women to acquire literacy and numeracy.

In his study Moyo (2014) researched the question "Is adult basic education the answer to rural women's poverty," He wanted to interrogate the following: Why is it that so far, the basic education and training and literacy interventions programmes seemingly have not fully yielded the desired results? Is the adult basic education that women are receiving relevant for their needs? Document analysis of the policy documents, journal papers and government reports were used as a means of collecting data. The findings demonstrated that needs analysis must be carried out in adult learning to determine the specific needs of women in their respective communities. The establishment of community platforms and information of partnership with various stakeholders were also seen as approaches that were likely to ease the plight of rural women.

2.5.1.1 Studies related in the Eastern Cape on the role of adult education in mitigating gender disparities

Related studies have been carried out on the role of adult education in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape for example, Tawiah and Ngmenkpieo (2018) and Eka (2005). Despite some attention given to this issue in this area, no research so far has specifically dealt with the topic of this study, namely a critical investigation on role of Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

The study by Tawiah and Ngmenkpieo (2018) investigated adult education in South Africa: "The perspectives of rural women in Khotso in the Eastern Cape". The aim of the study was to understand the perspectives of rural women in adult education in Khotso in the Eastern Cape.

A qualitative research approach in the form of case study was undertaken to understand the issues from the point of view of the participants. The study did not have a declared theoretical framework that guided the study. A sample of sixteen women participants from adult centres in the Khotso district in the Eastern Cape was involved. The findings of the study indicated that adult centres were not adequately resourced to provide the much-needed skills to women. Adult women also find it difficult to engage in their own income generating projects because the programmes that are offered do not address their needs and interests. Based on the findings, the paper recommends that adult education should be revamped to make the centres more effective in terms of skills training to improve their lives. With the primary focus on skills, it can be argued that the research did not sufficiently address the concerns of the women, which were also linked to what they experienced as obsolete practices and perceptions.

A study by Kheswa and Hoho (2014) looked at *ukuthwala*, the sexual-cultural practice with negative effects on the personality of young women in Africa including some parts of the Eastern Cape. Drawing from gender-strain and social exchange theories, vulnerable young women are sold by parents for poverty relief without considering safe sex practices between the young women and suggests without permission-whereas sold to suggest with permission of parents. This study accumulated previous research studies as a form of methodology to explore the socio-cultural influences driving males to abduct young women. The findings indicated that patriarchal attitudes of men and poverty stricken backgrounds perpetuate *ukuthwala* practices. Furthermore, although some abductions are consensual and arranged, reports indicate that in forced marriages young women are raped emotionally and psychologically abused. Given the findings of the research, recommendations are that anyone contravening the laws which protect the rights of women to education, security and integrity should be imprisoned. This study therefore focused on the legal aspect of addressing harmful practices.

Eka (2005) in his study analysed gender-poverty linkages in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The aim of the study was to investigate whether gender status (in the forms of groups, households or individuals) relates to the experience of poverty.

Specifically, the main question posed by the study was that in the face of policy measures to support women, whether women remain at more risk and disproportionately represented than men. The study used official survey data on the Eastern Cape for 1997-2002. The study did not have an overt theoretical framework. Drawing on the literature, the study addressed the conceptual definitions and notions of poverty and explored issues of gender inequality and its effect on poverty. The study suggested that unequal access to economic and social resources, gendered divisions of labour in the household extend to other institutional sites such as advertisements and television. This means that opportunities are skewed in favour of males. \$\$\$ not clear. The literature revealed that women were likely to experience poverty differently. The study established that the living conditions and life circumstances of women were more associated with the characteristics of poverty than that of men. The investigation has also established that the rural population is more likely than the urban population to be at risk with regard to the experience of poverty in the Eastern Cape. In the present study the focus was on the possible role of community Learning Centres in militating against the kinds of disparities noted by these researchers. From the above studies, it can be concluded that women are still exposed to many constraints and inhibitions that impact on them in achieving their full potential in education and to participate in socio-economic development. The present study focused on the role of Community Learning Centres in possibly mitigating against this.

The first objective of the present study was to identify the key factors, as experienced by the participants that perpetuate gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Previous studies revealed that some common factors that perpetuate gender disparities are stereotypes, status of women, sexism, religious beliefs, patriarchy and cultural beliefs. All these constraints lead to what are called power relations. A persistent pattern in the distribution of power is that of inequalities between women and men. Lindsey (2005:53) draws the conclusion that “regarding the set of roles, behaviours and attitudes that societies define as appropriate for women and men, ‘gender’ can be the cause, consequences and mechanism of power relations, from the intimate sphere of the household to the highest levels of political decision-making. Wider structures and institutions can also shape the distribution of power by reinforcing and relying on gender roles.

The present study also explores Lindsey's (2005) conclusion in the context of critically investigating the role of Community Learning Centres through detailed reference to a discussion with participants (adult educators and learners) in the context of interviews where they could share ideas on gender relations. The present study was intended to delve into stereotypes and gendered power relations more deeply, also considering possibilities for Community Learning Centres to play a role in mitigating against gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

2.5.2 Studies carried out on the impact of gender disparities

The second objective of the present study investigates how gender disparities are experienced by participants in Community Learning Centres and their impact on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. This study looks to see if these centres contribute if at all to increasing the economic equality of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape, as discussed in the context. Sen (1999: 108) argues that economic discrimination is a much broader concept than economic status and complex relationships exist between the culture and economic status of women. This is also the position adopted in this study by examining this from participants' perspectives. By reflecting with participants on linkages between inequality, development and growth, the impact of gender disparities will further be investigated.

Various studies have also looked at the economic disparities and their relation to the education system. Regarding gender disparities in education in general, Dollar and Gatti (in Klasen, 2006) have used theoretical literature to suggest that gender inequality reduces the average amount of human capital in a society and thus harms economic performance. This happens artificially and restricts the pool of talent from which to draw for education and thereby excludes highly qualified girls (taking less qualified boys instead). As Klasen (2006) notes, many of the East Asian countries have been able to be competitive on world markets through the use of female intensive export-oriented manufacturing industries, a strategy that is now finding followers in South Asia and individual countries across the developing world.

Socio-economic status therefore encloses not just income but also educational attainment, financial security and subjective perceptions of social status and social class.

As Klasen and Lamanna (2009:93) note, “socio-economic status can encompass a quality of life attributes as well as the opportunities and privileges afforded to people within society”. Klasen and Lamanna (2003) further state that there will be indirect effects if women do not have basic education. What is important is to concentrate on impacts as experienced by the participants within their social context as done in the present study. Cuberes and Teignier (2011:3) conclude that economic development alone is insufficient to ensure significant progress in important dimensions of women's empowerment. They further suggest that gender inequality in the economic arena may particularly hinder decision-making ability in the face of persistent stereotypes and that to bring about equality between men and women, it will be necessary to take policy action that favours women at the expense of men for a long time. Similarly, the World Bank (2001) report concludes that growth alone does not deliver the desired results with respect to gender equality, and that it may be necessary not only to reform legal and economic institutions but also to take active measures to correct the gender gaps in access and control of resources or political voice. What the present study is focusing on is whether Community Learning Centres can help to address the persistent stereotypes to which Cuberes and Teignier refer, and how they might assist in other ways to mitigate against gender disparities experienced by women and men as impacting on their lives.

2.5.3 Strategies that are usually employed to assist women mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in South Africa

In order to address the needs and interests of men and women, it is important to make a distinction between practical and strategic needs. Practical gender needs includes access to basic services such as food, clothes, health care, small scale women's projects and shelter while strategic needs are those that question the subordination in the gender system depending on the specific social context. Strategic needs may also include demands for equal pay for equal work, or against gender violence. With strategic skills, women are also able to decide over their sexuality and the number of children to have. What could be problematic about the term “practical needs” is that it could serve to reinforce the idea that certain skills are the domain of women. World Vision International (WVI) (2005: 83) notes that practical needs may be seen as perpetuating gender disparities because practical needs reinforce the already established roles of women.

Strategic gender needs are the needs women identify. They may involve the decision making power or control over resources. Strategic needs empower women to challenge the already established gender roles of women. In order to mitigate gender disparities, programmes initiated in developing countries should direct their attention to transforming the construction of established norms that continue to reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality (WVI, 2005: 84). In the present study, I was mindful of these distinctions (between practical and strategic needs) when engaging with the participants. This was the guiding idea behind the present study intended to challenge stereotypes of the roles of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

2.6 THE WOMEN EMPOWERMENT BILL

This bill lends force to section 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, as far as the empowerment of women and gender equality are concerned. Accordingly, the South African government has proactively taken measures to address the slow pace of gender transformation, with the Women Empowerment and gender equality (WEGE) Bill being one of the latest developments. The bill seeks to establish a legislative framework for the empowerment of women and to adjust all the stages of laws. At the level of the United States, South Africa has recognised numerous international human rights institutions, treaties and special procedures. These include the following;

- i. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (December 1979);
- ii. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (September 1995);
- iii. The Millennium Declaration and Development Goals (September 2000);
- iv. The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (July 2004); and
- v. The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (August 2008).

The bill also seeks to regulate all aspects of the laws and the implementation of the laws relating to women empowerment and the appointment and representation of women in decision-making positions.

Further, to facilitate the development and implementation of plans and strategies by designated public bodies and designated private bodies for the promotion of women empowerment and gender equality. However, it can be argued that although women have made significant inroads into their empowerment through taking advantage of initiatives at their disposal, they continue to face considerable challenges. According to the Office of Status of Women (OSW) (in Catherine, 2015) the topmost among the challenges has been poor implementation of policies designed to empower women. Catherine (2015) further notes that rural infrastructure continues to be either inadequate or lacking to effectively addressing the multiple women empowerment challenges. "Making information accessible to women especially those in rural areas is a major bottleneck that needs urgent attention. Lack of employable skills, resources and a proper framework for coordinating women empowerment, coupled with clear lines of communication and accountability are the other challenges that must be addressed" (OSW in Catherine, 2015:5)

Although empowerment is not an easy concept to define, many field-related definitions emerged in the process of seeking to conceptualise empowerment with reference to relevant literature. For example, Cattaneo and Chapman (2010:647) define empowerment as a process that "increases one's personal, interpersonal or political power to enable the individual to take action to improve their own life situations". In the field of psychology, empowerment is defined as "a sense of personal control and freedom which allows people to become their own agents and masters regarding those issues that concern them and how this is supported by having access and control to resources" (Zimmerman, in Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010: 648). Mosedale (2005: 243) points out that empowerment are based on certain assumptions. First, it is people who are considered disempowered who can be empowered and empowerment is not something that can be given but has to be achieved by the women themselves. As for the outcomes, Mosedale (2005:244) notes, "it is often assumed that empowerment will result in women being able to take part in decision-making on issues that concern them in the family or in society". Mosedale makes the further point that there is no final state of total empowerment but it is always relative, in time and in space. However, it depends on how women perceive their possibilities for choice in particular contexts.

Kabeer (2005:161) defines empowerment as a process of change, whereby those who were previously denied the opportunity to make strategic choices about their lives gain such ability. This is another reason why the present study focused on recommendations for mitigating gender disparities that are experienced as restricting life chances (Mosedale, 2005:244). The common factor in the above various definitions of empowerment is, as Moser (in Oakley, 2001:4) puts it: “empowerment is viewed as a process that engenders power, ability and control, which when used allows people to act on important issues. It seeks to identify power less in terms of domination over others and more importantly on the capacity of women to increase their self-reliance and internal strength.” This study likewise focuses on the empowerment concept as revolving around the idea of power to make a choice. Put differently, women’s social empowerment can include variables such as economic independency, control over income, self-confidence, decision-making skills and social participation (Rewani & Tochwang, 2014). This study draws on and benefits from an understanding of power and empowerment coming from different authors. What is important is that in the specific case of women, empowerment implies a dismantling of the cultural norms and traditional practices that devalue disempower and dispossess women. Therefore, the present study also sought to discuss cultural norms with participants. Finally, as Mosedale (2005:244) notes, “empowerment involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources”. The present study concentrates on these possibilities (or constraints against them) in the operation of the selected Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

2.7 WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (WID, WAD and GAD approaches)

2.7.1 Women in development

One of the first responses to addressing the problem of women’s absence in development in developing countries was the Women in Development (WID) approach, which attempted to “add” women to development without fundamentally changing the field. The Women’s Committee of the Washington D.C. Chapter of the Society for International Development coined the term “women in development”, abbreviated as WID (Moser, 1993: 2).

Ester Boserup in the 1970s pioneered a study on Women in Development (WID), where she argued that development has an adverse effect on women and often leads to further impoverishment, marginalisation and exploitation (Kurian, 2000; Rai, 2000 in Lindsey, 2005). This pattern indicates that what is considered by some as 'development' can be experienced as eroding women's overall wellbeing. This is a path to negative development outcomes for women (Lindsey, 2005). Therefore, it is important to engage with women themselves to explore their understandings. Norris (in Lindsey, 2005:136) points out that it is often the case that as 'development' proceeds, women are denied access to productive sources and new technologies serve to lower their relative, if not absolute, productivity. For example, in societies characterised by powerful patriarchal institutions, men and women rarely share equally the limited resources available to families, a situation that deteriorates with development. The hardest hit are rural women whose non-domestic work consists of subsistence farming even though they are not landowners engaged in cash crop farming (Lindsey, 2005:135).

Lindsey (2005) makes the point that developmental programmes typically rely on standard international economic definitions, which exclude most work women perform, such as childcare, domestic labour and subsistence farming. In addition to farming, development policies have also ignored the gender implications of the other labour-force activities. The trickle-down model is supposed to operate in the short term and benefit society at large in the long term. This is a model that suggests that if there is overall economic growth in the GDP of the country, it will trickle down to the poorest and most marginalised. Whilst the theory has received a considerable amount of attention, it has faced much criticism. Rising inequalities in societies that are supposedly growing attest to the need to criticise this model. Lindsey (2005) argues from a gender-sensitive perspective that in adopting this model, policies are designed to upgrade the economic standards of families by concentrating on the assumed male head of household, who is the breadwinner, with the dependent wife in the homemaker role. "Development programs often assume that by improving employment of men, the whole family would benefit" (Lindsey, 2005:136). However, the problem with this assumption is that as a result of this kind of discourse, women's work remains undercounted, undervalued and underpaid (Staudt in Lindsey, 2005:136).

2.7.2 Women and development framework

Towards the end of the 1970s, a new framework approach emerged grounded in Marxism and dependency theory, termed Women and Development (WAD). While previous thinking held that development was a vehicle to advance women, the new ideas suggested that development is possible if women are actively involved rather than being simply passive recipients of development aid. WAD therefore took this thinking a step further and suggested that women have always been an integral part of development and did not suddenly appear in the 1970s. The WAD therefore argued for women-only development projects to remove women from the existing patriarchal hegemony. In this sense, WAD is different from WID because it focuses on the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism. One strength of the WID is that it stresses the relationship between women and the work that they perform in their societies as economic agents in both the public and public sphere. WAD also emphasises the distinctive nature of roles women play in the maintenance and development of their societies (Singh, 2007). WAD also understands that the integration of women in development efforts would serve to reinforce the existing structures of inequality present in societies overrun by patriarchal interest. In other words, WAD is seen as offering a more critical conceptualisation of women's position than WID.

However, this new approach reflected the growing dissatisfaction with the outcomes of capitalism that increased the dependence of formally socialist nations on capitalist states (Singh, 2007: 104). As André Gunder Frank famously argued in his 1966 article, "The Development of Underdevelopment", capitalism, both global and local, was classically responsible for the underdevelopment of the Third World (Kay, 2005: 1178). WAD advocates that the notion of "integrating women into development", as prescribed under the WID paradigm, served primarily to sustain existing global structures of inequality and to maintain the economic dependency of Third World countries on industrialised states (Rathgeber in Connelly, Li, MacDonald & Parpart, 2000:61). However, WAD's analysis of development also represented women as one of many exploited classes within the capitalist system (Singh, 2007: 104) thereby also downplaying the differences between women, especially those along racial and ethnic lines (Connelly et al., 2000:61).

2.7.3 Gender and development framework

Gender and development (GAD) evolved out of and in response to the narrow focal point characterising WID and WAD. For example, the WID approach began from an acceptance of existing social structures rather than examining why women had fared less well from development strategies during the past decade. In other words, WID approaches concentrated only on how women could better be intergrated into ongoing development initiatives. This non-confrontational approach avoided questioning the sources and nature of women's subordination and oppression and focused instead on advocacy for more equal participation in education, employment and other spheres of society (Singh, 2007). Miller and Rezavi (1998:04) note that the literature from the GAD approach emphasise the continuing or rising vulnerability of women over the course of economic development. According to this view, inequalities between men and women are shaped by institutional arrangements such as patriarchal family structures or discriminatory labour practices and property laws, which may not be affected by the economic growth process or could even be affected negatively. Improvements in the selected measures of women's status, some claim, cannot be assumed to translate into reductions in inequalities between men and women (Kurian, 2000; Rai, 2002).

GAD therefore, shifted the focus from 'women' to 'gender' and emphasised the relative position and the interaction between men and women within the totality of complex socio-economic, political and cultural structures. Saunders (2009:11) notes that in contrast with the optimistic trickle-down effect by WID, the GAD approach emphasises that the marginalisation of women and their limited bargaining power place them in an inferior position. Thus, GAD stresses women's emancipation through state involvement including education, health care, childcare, housing and pension along with increased political representation on the part of organised women (Saunders, 2009). GAD attempts to incorporate in practice a more bottom-up and people-centred approach, emphasising women as agents of change rather than as passive recipients of development. Kabeer (in Saunders, 2009:11) has also identified conscientisation as being central to increasing women's capacity to define and analyse their respective social situation or the structured roots of discrimination and subordination and to "construct a vision of the kind of world they want, and to act in pursuit of that vision".

Lindsey (2005) notes that GAD proponents urged a fundamental re-examination of social structures and institutions within socio-economic and political structures in order to eliminate gender inequalities. Similarly, Rathgeber (in Lindsey, 2005) suggests that the idea of gender mainstreaming, proclaimed in Beijing Platform for Action in the fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in 1995, was one of the important strategies in GAD that seeks to increase gender awareness in all areas and levels and thereby achieve greater gender equality.

In the 1980s, Moser developed the Moser gender-planning framework for GAD-oriented development planning. She expanded the GAD into a methodology for gender policy and planning. The Moser framework follows the gender and development approach in emphasising the importance of gender relations and tries to investigate the reasons and processes that lead to conventions of access and control. The Moser framework includes gender roles identification, gender needs assessment, disaggregating control of resources and decision-making within the household, planning for balancing work and household responsibilities (Saunders, 2009).

Despite the positive changes that the GAD brought, GAD tends to see Third World women as a homogenous group. However, according to the UN (2005:04), women do not form a homogenous group defined by their sex alone. Their interests would also be a function of their socio-economic class, race, religion, ethnicity, and other demographic characteristics of age and location. In addition, there is a greater probability that women who make it into the political mainstream are likely to come from the elite and hence they may not be inclined to challenge the interests of their class especially when reinforced by traditional values of loyalty and gratitude to one's family and patrons. This imposes a narrow 'Western' feminist perspective along with implicit assumptions of the West's supremacy. According to the critics, GAD also fails to analyse the power relations intersected by gender, race and class, which means that in the analysis and in practice, programs directed to benefit Third World women do not succeed (Bhavnani, Foan, & Kurian, 2003:06)

The implication therefore is that GAD does not uncover the types of trade-offs that women are prepared to make for the sake of achieving their ideals of marriage or motherhood. The GAD perspective can be seen as theoretically unassociated from WID, but in practice, it has components of both.

While many development agencies are now committed to a gender approach, in practice the WID approach seems dominant (Connelly et al., 2000). Development agencies still foster gender transformation to mean economic advancement of women.

The third objective of this study wanted to recommend possible ways in which the Community Learning Centres could assist people in mitigating gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. From the above studies it can therefore be concluded that the programmes adopted in developing countries including South Africa still regard women as a homogenous group and in most cases address practical needs rather than strategic needs.

The literature review on the related studies carried out in both developed and developing countries and South Africa offers guidance on factors that might perpetuate gender disparity and its impact. Strategies that are commonly used as mitigating gender disparities were also discussed as well as critiques certain models. The next section looks at the theoretical framework that undergirds this study.

2.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section therefore focuses on the theoretical frameworks commonly used in adult education together with a discussion of strengths and weaknesses. A justification on why the chosen theoretical framework is relevant to the present study is also highlighted.

A theoretical framework is a structure that guides research relying on a formal theory constructed by using an established, coherent explanation of certain phenomena and relationships (Eisenhard in Grant & Onsaloo, 2014:13). In other words, a theory consists of the selected theory (or theories) that undergirds the researcher's thinking with regards to how she or he understands and plans to research the topic as well as concepts. This section therefore reviews the theories that are commonly used in adult education noting their strengths and weaknesses and finally a stand is taken on the theoretical framework that undergirds this study, namely feminism.

2.8.1 Systems theory

The system perspectives see human behaviour as the outcome of the shared interactions of persons operating within linked social systems.

Thus, this theory considers the observed reality as needing to be placed in a systematic context where the individual properties of the single parts become connected to the operation of the whole (Weinberg, 2001). The relationships between the parts themselves and the events they produce through their interaction become more important than focusing on parts, with the result that system elements are rationally connected towards a shared purpose (Weinberg, 2001; Golinelli, 2009).

The disciplines, such as mathematics, physics, engineering, biology, psychology, cultural anthropology, economics and sociology, have started looking at the phenomenon as the outcome of interactions within and among systems. A functionalist systems perspective considers the structure of roles as an important mechanism for maintaining system balance. In this view, roles are associated with the usual behaviour of persons occupying a particular social position. Individuals therefore need to apply a global vision to underline this functioning. This implies that in order to fully comprehend the phenomenon under investigation, we need to approach it in a holistic manner (Weinberg, 2001). Some systems theorists, however, adopt a more constructivist perspective, focusing on linkages between people's perceptions and discourses.

Checkland (1985:05) develops what he calls soft systems methodology, in which he criticises any reduction of the real world into an experiment; he argues that the researcher's aim is to facilitate a process of intersubjective communication among all those involved in the study. This argument bears similarity to humanistic and development theories as explained below.

2.8.2 Humanistic and development theories

Humanistic and development theories place more emphasis on people's engaging with their environment in ways that can lead to what they consider to be developmental. Turning and Artino (2011) point out that humanistic and developmental theories tend to promote individual development and are learner-centred (as far as education is concerned). The goal of humanistic or developmental theory is therefore to produce individuals who have the potential for self-actualisation and are self-directed and internally motivated. Self-directed learning implies that adults can plan, direct and assess their own learning. These theories have often been represented as the goal of adult education emphasising independence and individual play in learning (Turning & Artino, 2011).

Furthermore, these theories centre on how human behaviour develops in education and how people both change and stay the same over time. Human development is seen to proceed in clearly defined stages based on a difficult interaction of biological, psychological and social undertakings. Currently, there are two streams with regard to theorising in terms of the developmental perspective: one based in psychology and the other based in sociology. Psychological perspectives focus on self-directed learning and motivation. Sociological perspectives link to constructivism and place more emphasis on how people learn together and construct ways of understanding their lifeworlds (Hoban, Lawson, Mazimanian, Best & Siebel, 2005).

One limitation of self-directed learning is the neglect of humanistic and developmental theories to take the social conditions of learning into consideration. Thus, as Bougley (2012) notes, the discourse of the autonomous learner constructs the student as an individual devoid of history and socio-cultural norms who succeeds or fails in adult education by virtue of inherent characteristics. Feminists also criticise the humanistic or development approaches. As Hoban et al., (2005) note humanism has created confusion for women and other marginalised groups since it can be reasoned that issues that continue to discriminate against women such as racism, class and ethnicity are perpetuated in humanistic studies or developmental studies. In so far as it presupposes that universal rights have their foundation in the subject as a self-identity that is prior to the contingent realms of history and culture. The humanistic itself is a disembodied and unitary category whose rights are guaranteed as natural or intrinsic properties. It may seem that a feminist practice would perpetuate the assumption that individual rights are essential and universal. In so far as the normative project of feminism could be described as the claiming of such rights for women. However, the construction of a universal, intrinsic right has entailed processes of exclusion and selection (that universal suffrage equals male suffrage). Feminism exposes humanism as an ideological legitimization of power and committed to women as a unity (Ahmed, 1996).

2.8.3 The transformative learning theory

Another important theoretical development in the field of adult learning is the transformative learning theory of Mezirow. Mezirow (2003) developed the notion of a natural process between developments in the theory of adult education based on psychology and popular education.

Mezirow also argued that psychological truth affords the basis for the fundamental task of the adult educator, namely, to foster critical reflection. In this regard, by linking psychological truths to critical reflection, Mezirow's theory cultivated the enthusiasm of many adult education scholars and practitioners. Christie (2008) applauds Mezirow's theory which she sees by implication celebrates diversity and seeks social justice.

Although Mezirow's theory is influential, it has received criticism. Corley (2003) comments that Mezirow's transformative learning does not consider the impact of the individual's race, class and gender or the historical context in which the learning occurs. Those propounding andragogy still wish to place emphasis on motivations for self-directed learning. Meanwhile, according to popular education critics, the dynamics of capitalism and the ideological processes of hegemony building that are put in motion to ensure the reproduction of the system are not taken into adequate consideration by Mezirow. Taylor (2013) argues that more attention needs to be given to people who have been marginalised, silenced, excluded and oppressed most of their lives. This leads to the next theory, critical pedagogy

2.8.4 Critical pedagogy

According to Giroux (in Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2003:30) critical theory in education is fundamentally committed to the development and involvement of a culture of schooling including adult education that supports the empowerment of culturally disadvantaged students and the marginalized in terms of race, class, ethnicity, age and gender. Accordingly, this pedagogical perspective seeks to help transform those classrooms structures and practices that perpetuate an undemocratic way of life. Of particular importance, in this instance, is a critical analysis of an investigation into the manner in which traditional theories and practices of public schooling influence the development of political emancipation and the improvement in a culture of participation and social action. In short, critical theory in education is devoted to mapping out injustices in education, and then seeking and proposing remedies for dealing with those injustices. In some respects these tallies with the approach that the present study is adopting.

In an effort to strive for an emancipatory culture of schooling, critical theory in education calls upon teachers to recognise how schools have embraced theories and practices that function to sustain a lack of equality in relations of power under the guise of a neutral view of education. As a result, critical theory also challenges people (educators and learners) to change what they perceive as 'truth'. In defining the historicity of knowledge, which is often linked to the process of power to control what 'knowledge' will be represented and granted the status of 'truth', critical theory calls upon people to become more aware of this (Giroux in Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2003:30).

Ornstein and Hunkins (2004:186) claim that modern day critical theorists focus on the dynamics of power and control in education. These critical theorists, also referred to as critical pedagogues, include authors such as Michael Apple, Peter McLaren, Henry Giroux and Paulo Freire, all of whom argue that both the content and forms of education and particularly the curriculum are ideological in nature and intent (Apple, 2013:12). Apple (2013) refers to hegemonic oppression which produces important aspects of inequality and involves cultural forms, meanings and rituals that determine permission to the *status quo* and the individual's particular place within society (Akita, 2010:85). The present study also examines critically the way in which the curriculum in the Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district has been implemented and the ways in which educators and learners interpret the content.

Apple (2013: 22) argues that because education institutions are usually the main agencies for the transmission of an effective dominant and hegemonic culture, schools and adult education classes are more than often seen to promote the major economic as well as cultural activity of the dominant culture in society. His view is explored in the present study, along with Akita (2010:85) who claims that hegemony presents itself in many forms and cannot be separated from ideology.

In so far as gender is concerned, clearly, hegemony can also present itself in relationships. In this regard, Akita (2010: 85) argues that hegemony is nourished by patriarchal tendencies in most nations that can be traced to the values, norms and religion, which may have been imposed upon them. Lindsey (2005:3) similarly defines patriarchy as a male-dominated social structure leading to the oppression of women. Patriarchy can also refer to male-female relationships which reveal male attempts to justify the exploitation of women.

In patriarchal societies the daily practices in “schooling and education, though crucial to achieving equality do not operate outside of the system of patriarchy” (Coetzee, 2001: 300). What these authors argue is that even if the issue of power relations between men and women come under examination, our understanding of what is at play may itself be seen through hegemonic lenses. They call on researchers to avoid such lenses as they engage with participants.

McLaren (in Darder et al., 2003:86) suggests that the ideals of culture associated with the dominant class are taken up in content and form of schooling. McLaren (2003) takes a Marxist-oriented perspective focusing on class relations. He also sees that schools reinforce and maintain gender stereotypes through different components of the curricula. These include representations in textbooks, curriculum materials, course content, and social relations embodied in classroom practices that benefit dominant groups and exclude subordinate ones. Thus, the curriculum favours certain forms of knowledge over others and affirms the dreams, desires, and values of selected groups of students over other groups, often discriminating on the basis of age, location and gender. These forms of discrimination are ones that are all included when the present study speaks of gender disparities, which are clearly also linked to other social locations such as gender and age.

Not only does the officially prescribed curriculum exercise overt power and control over learners but also the hidden curriculum. This was the point made in chapter one when the term ‘hidden curriculum’ was explained in brief. According to McLaren (2003:86), the hidden curriculum includes teaching and learning styles that are emphasised in the classroom, the messages that get transmitted subtly rather than overtly to the student by the physical and instructional environment, governance structures, teacher expectations, and grading procedures. The hidden curriculum can induce students to comply with dominant ideologies and social practices related to authority, behaviour and morality (Lindsey, 2005: 296). In the present study, the notion of hidden curriculum is borne in mind as part of the investigation.

Freire (1970: 72) argues that the traditional conception of ‘education’, what he describes as the ‘banking model’, is the primary culprit in both creating and supporting power and control in the school system. In the banking model, teachers are the depositors of knowledge whose role is to fill the learner or ‘empty container’ with the knowledge that the teacher deems important.

Knowledge is viewed as a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. A liberated form of education where it is assumed that knowledge is neutral differs from Freire's banking method. In Freire's dialogical model, on the contrary, teaching is seen as ideally a 'partnership' in which both the teacher and learner are responsible for creating and sharing knowledge. To maximise the world of knowledge, teachers and learners use what Freire (1970: 79) calls the 'problem-posing' model. In this model, the teacher presents the learner with a problem in need of solving. The problem at hand is insoluble using *status quo* considerations because it asks the revolutionary question: "Why?" Asking this question challenges learners to question their world critically and does not involve rote memorisation of 'facts' that is common in the banking model.

Another important theoretical contribution made by Freire is the notion of *praxis* which refers to the positive feedback interplay between theory and practice. However, most authors agree that his most significant contribution is the theory of conscientisation. This theory states that through education an oppressed individual can develop critical consciousness. In this view adult educators could change from "being for others" to "being for themselves" (Freire & Macedo in Shih, 2018:6). This theory states that through education an oppressed individual can develop critical consciousness, as opposed to a naïve one, thereby becoming aware of his or her oppression and the injustices that stem from it. That is, Freire insisted that educational activity should be grounded in the lived experiences of the participants, while at the same time enabling them to become more aware. He also understood that adult education should be rooted in critical thinking. The present study examines whether such critical thinking is encouraged in the Community Learning Centres under investigation.

Freire (1973) and Giroux (2011) further suggest that for true transformation to occur within education, not only the oppressed but also the oppressors must be saved as they, too, have been dehumanised by their actions in oppressing others. For oppression to end, the lived experience and consciousness of each person must be valued and applied before emancipation for all can be achieved. This idea was taken up in the present study: the research design consciously included two mixed groups, men and women, to discuss issues of gender disparities so that they might engage with one another.

Brookfield (2000:248) claims that the strength of critical theory in education is that it can become the cornerstone of democracy in that it provides students with citizenship rights. In other words, the linkage between a robust, meaningful democracy and pedagogy can clearly be understood through the lenses of transformative learning, engagement and action. As in other theories referred to above, the sense of agency in critical education is important for students because they need to feel that they are in control of their lives and empowered to handle situations that confront them. However, often democracy in political life is linked to democratising with the male face or a male democracy, an incomplete and very biased form of democracy (Brookfield, 2000).

Dolby (2003: 8) points out that strength of critical theory is that it adopts the use of popular culture in teaching for diversity in adult learning in order to help students expand their thinking. Dolby further notes that when students participate in a reflective and critical discussion about, for instance, a film depicting relations and differences along the lines of race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality or class, they expand their thinking about notions of stereotypes and about the struggles of marginalised people. Moreover, students can reflect on their own prejudices and renegotiate their own identities. The present study explores to what extent such critical reflection is inspired in the Community Learning Centres under investigation.

Critical pedagogy empowers teachers too. They can start to construct their own meaning of the nature of the teaching process and produce knowledge that challenges the standard curriculum (Kincheloe, 2008:19). That is, teachers start to develop a deep understanding of the student's environment, current pre-occupations, social interactions and social cultural background. Kincheloe (2008:20) further notes that advocates of critical theory recognise the importance of understanding the social construction of student consciousness, focusing on motives, values and emotions, and diverse student groups in terms of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, and class as many factors influence the learning process.

However, critical theory in education has weaknesses like any other theoretical framework. According to Darder et al. (2003:17), the language of critical pedagogy has often been criticised by feminist scholars and working-class educators who believe that theoretical language ultimately functions to create a new form of oppression, the oppression of intellectual discourse not sufficiently rooted in participant concerns.

These critics argue that, on a practical level, in relation to gender discrimination educators can be made more aware of how the use of terms such as man, mankind, chairman and forefathers when referring to both sexes, clearly do not include women. Alternative terms such as human beings, humanity, chairperson and ancestors are more appropriate and inclusive (Mazile in Adeyemi, 2000).

In the light of the above, I consider feminism to be the most appropriate theoretical approach to undergird my research to complement and challenge other theoretical approaches commonly used in adult education when addressing gender inequalities in adult education.

2.9 Feminism

The study will be grounded in feminism. Feminism is a collection of political movements, social movements and ideologies that defend the political, social, sexual, cultural and economic rights of women. In its most simplistic and frequently cited terms, feminism is about achieving equality between men and women. Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) argue that the value of taking a feminist standpoint is that, one is able to analyse the connection between power and knowledge to bring out the hidden power relations of knowledge production. The feminist perspective therefore places gender at core of the research inquiry. Since its emergence, feminist scholarship has sought to challenge patriarchal systems through adding feminist perspectives to what has traditionally been male biased research. Digging a little deeper into the field of Western feminist theory, the true intention of feminist theory is to expand options available to both sexes while eliminating gender stratification within cultures. What is common to the feminists is that they all act, speak, write and advocate on women's issues, rights, and identity injustices to females in the social status core (Yuval-Davis & Werbner, 1999; Narayan, 2004:215). Feminism is often associated with Mary Wollstonecraft, JS Mill, Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millett, Germaine Greer, Sheila Rowbotham and Foucault (Hart, 2005: 328). There are various kinds of feminism and in the next section this is discussed.

2.9.1 History of feminism

Feminism has developed over time according to three waves. The first wave of feminism in the United Kingdom (UK) and the US started in 1918, and focused on emancipation of women, particularly on the rights of women to vote (Beasley, 1999). Furthermore, equality of women and participation in the public sphere of policies was another concern. Beasley (1999) notes that this resulted in the establishment of gender equity laws and subsequently, the significant provision of equality of opportunity in the spheres of education, health care, profession and in the workplace (Hughes, 2002). However, the first wave movement did not last because it failed to spread across the world, it centred on the interests of white, middle-income women and did not address diverse needs of women (Hughes, 2002).

The second wave was established in the early 1960's and focused on women's oppression as women undertook to end sex discrimination and promote equal opportunities (Blaxter, Hughes & Malcolm, 2006). In other words the second wave of feminism centred on the global oppression of women. Women in the second wave were regarded as having common problems with regard to oppression regardless of other factors that could interact with this kind of oppression such as race, class, age, ethnicity, gender and other forms of discrimination that continue to divide our societies. The notion of universal sisterhood proved to be problematic, excluding the specificity of black women's experiences whilst universalising others (Lewis & Mills 2003). Black women felt that the globalisation of women's identity was inadequate and responded by drawing attention to areas of diversity among women. Third World women put emphasis on "multiple difference", complex diversities and locations of arising from cultural differences (Hughes, 2002:76). Thus, third wave feminism shaped the feminist movement to embrace the diversity within and between women and be more inclusive (Mann & Huffman, 2005).

Thus, feminist theory is by no means a homogenous field of study, not even when narrowed down to feminist theory concerned with gender disparity issues. Global social change presents new and ongoing challenges for women, so a feminist agenda addressing the needs of all women is never in a finalised form.

It is unlikely there will ever be full agreement on identifying problems and determining strategies to address the problems of women (Lindsey, 2005: 13). In this study, the researcher wants to point out that the causes of gender disparities are at least to some extent, dependent on how women are perceived. Therefore, the introduction of the theoretical approach will mainly be concerned with how women are conceptualised within mainstream Western feminist theory and post-colonial feminist theory respectively. This discussion will also serve as a basis for further discussion on the causes of gender disparities and the choice of the appropriate feminist approach to undergird the study.

2.9.2 Western feminism and its main branches

Mohanty defines Western feminism theory as all theories that take the West as norm (Mohanty, 2005:195). According to various critiques of euro-centrism in academe, most feminist theories, liberal, Marxist as well as the radical feminism (Lindsey, 2005:14), are usually regarded as the main branches of Western feminism. Western feminism also includes multicultural and global feminism and ecofeminism (Slay & Stephens, 2013).

2.9.2.1 Liberal / Cultural feminism

According to Lindsey (2005), liberal feminism as a mainstream feminist theory centres on the simple proposition that all people are created equal and should not be denied equality of opportunity because of sex. Thus, liberal feminism focus is on equality between men and women, especially in the political and economic spheres (Cornwall & Edward, 2014). Liberal feminists also argue that society holds the false belief that women are, by nature, less intellectually and physically capable than men. This is their main concern. As a result, such feminists concentrate upon legislative changes which grant equality between men and women. Liberal feminism may also embrace cultural feminism with its focus on empowering women by emphasising the positive qualities associated with women's roles, such as nurturing, caring, cooperation and connectedness to others (Worell in Lindsey, 2005:14). The issue of how much women are alike and how much they are different is highlighted in this emphasis.

2.9.2.2 Socialist Feminism/ Marxist feminism

The socialist feminists locate the causes of women's oppression in the capitalist system and argue that sexism and capitalism are mutually supportive. The unpaid labour of women in the home and their paid labour in a reserve labour force simultaneously serve patriarchy and capitalism. Many socialist feminists, both men and women, also believe that economic and emotional dependence go hand in hand (Lindsey, 2005:14). According to Kiguwa (2004), social feminists believe that capitalism needs to be eliminated and socialist principles be adapted in both home and workplace; contemporary socialist feminists have highlighted the interrelatedness of race, class and sexuality. Although socialist feminism is explicitly tied to Marxist theory, there are key differences between the two. Lindsey (2005:14) notes, "Marxist theory focuses on property and economic conditions to build an ideology whereas the socialist feminism focuses on sexuality and gender relations".

2.9.2.3 Radical feminism

Radical feminism believes that patriarchy is the overreaching structure that oppresses women due to their sex (Hughes, 2002). Unlike those strands of feminism that seek to address gender inequality through reforming the existing socio-political-legal system (liberal feminism), radical feminism believes that a radical restructuring of society through eliminating male supremacy and challenging social norms which hamper women's advancement is the only way to bring about a gender just society. The aim of radical feminism is to overthrow patriarchy by contesting standard gender roles and the oppression of women (Cornwall & Edward, 2014). Furthermore, radical feminism asserts that women's oppression is present regardless of whether the society is capitalist, socialist, communal or individual (Kiguwa, 2004). Therefore, institutions that revise the overlapping forms of class, race and gender need to be devised (Lindsey, 2005:15).

2.9.2.4 Multicultural and global feminism/Ecofeminism

Multicultural feminism centres focuses on the intersection of gender with race, class and issues related to the colonisation and exploitation of women in the developing

world. Global feminism is a movement of people working for change across national boundaries. Global feminism contends that no woman is free until the conditions that oppress women worldwide are eliminated (Bunch, in Lindsey, 2005:16). Lindsey (2005) notes that multicultural feminism focuses on the specific cultural elements and historical conditions that serve to maintain women's oppressions. She also notes that some women are drawn into feminism by environmental activism. These women are the catalyst of ecofeminism, feminism's newest branch. Low and Tremayne (in Lindsey, 2005:17) note, "Drawing on earth-based spiritual imagery, ecofeminism suggests that the earth's original balance was upset through patriarchal domination of the planet." This implies that ecofeminists believe that the planet can be healed and ecological harmony restored through political action emphasising the principle of equality of all species and emphasis on so-called feminine characteristics (Bowerbank in Lindsey, 2005:17). Lindsey (2005) argues that ecofeminism with its viewpoint and emphasis on interdependence in all its forms can be seen as particularly compatible with global feminism.

Although these main branches can be regarded as broader and deeper and concentrated on the diverse needs of women, they still rely on white, middle-class women and therefore arguably fail to address the needs of women in the Third World or once colonised nations (Chilisa & Ntseane, 2014). The study is therefore underpinned by Third World feminism. An important difference between Western and Third World feminism is found in their respective conceptualisation of women as the subject of struggle. While feminists make equality between men and women the centre of their struggles, Third World feminism stresses satisfaction of basic material needs as a pressing issue in the context of a disadvantaged international economic order (Sauders, 2002:06). In other words, as Sauders (2002:06) notes, "the situation of women in the Third World is perceived not only as the result of unequal gender relations, but as the consequence of a wide range of oppressive situations that transcend gender categories are also related to race, class, nation, sexuality ethnicity and other variables that continue to divide our people in our societies". The implication here is that even though everybody is simultaneously positioned in social categories such as gender, race, class and sexuality, these categories cannot be understood in isolation. For instance, addressing one category, such as gender, draws us to how it is affected by race, social class and sexuality (Brah & Phoenix, 2004).

2.9.3 Post-colonial theory and Post-colonial feminism

Before discussing the concerns of Post-colonial feminism theory it is equally important to get familiarized with the Post-colonial theory. Post-colonial is a field haunted by the complex connections between domination and subjection/resistance, connections rooted in colonial history but which continue in various guises until today (Moore-Gilbert in Khanal, 2012). A key post-colonial theme concerns the process of decolonization currently taking place globally, which throws new light on the relationships between hegemon and subaltern, coloniser and colonised, West and Third world (Kappor, 2008: xiv). The Post-colonial theory came under heavy criticism by feminists who reacted against the lack of gender issues in post-colonial thought considering it to be a masculinist field. This was so because the post-colonial theorists engaged themselves in analysing those texts that represented the colonial/imperial context and were written by British males. These texts represented a certain kind of masculinity that could make the British males appear as the 'colonial subject' belonging to the 'ruling race'. Hence one can come across images in these texts where British males have often been represented as being adventurous setting out to explore the 'virgin' lands of the Orient, hard-working, courageous, unemotional and patriotic (Mills, 1998:99).

2.9.3.1 *Post-colonial feminism theory*

Post-colonial feminist theories are interdisciplinary and cut across the disciplines such as philosophy, political science, human geography, sociology and economics. Post-colonial feminism theory emerged from traditional post-colonial theory in the 1980's (Steans, 1998; Loomba, 2005) and share many basic characteristics with post-structural feminism. The main aim of post-colonial theory is to deconstruct truths, norms and knowledge that are presented as natural and reveal them as socially constructed (Eriksson, 2005:17). Notably, post-colonial feminism puts emphasis on the non-universality of women experiences, which is regarded as being shaped by multiple socio-cultural differences (Hughes, 2002; Kiguwa, 2004). Post-colonial feminist theory aims at racialising mainstream feminist thought and at the same time genderising colonialism and post-colonialism. That is, the focus is on highlighting the social categories and their links with gender categorisation.

Some post-colonial feminists draw on Foucault's philosophical work. For example, Collins (2000) who parted with the Marxist interpretations of power relations focuses on how power operates in day to day interactions between people and institutions. Foucault also makes provision for resistance in his theory. However, this thesis does not attempt a detailed examination of his argument.

Central to post-colonial feminism is the understanding of power as relational, rather than material or static. According to Eriksson (2005), relational power can generally be understood or experienced in three ways: it highlights people's (collective) capacity to shape the relational environment (i.e., to shape the dynamics of social relationships); it points to the ability to use the relationship to bring a vision to manifestation; it can be understood as the capacity to change the nature of relations over time, rendering them less dominant. Based on Foucault's post-structural concept of power, post-colonial feminists focus on the discursive aspects of power and the connection between knowledge and power (Eriksson, 2005:18). They focus on the need to change discourses as part of the process of attempting to change power relations in definite contexts.

2.9.3.2 Theoretical concerns of post-colonial feminism

a) Representation and location

The theoretical concerns of post-colonial feminism are largely connected to the issues of representation of women's perspectives and the question of location (Hughes, 2002). Concerning the issue of representation Quayson (in Bose, 2005) distinguishes between the two ways in which representation is used: political representation and discursive representation. Quayson (in Bose, 2005) suggests that "post-colonial feminists recover and represent the perspectives of those who have not been able to represent themselves in colonial structures of power", that is, in non-West as well as the West. It seeks to highlight the voices of the marginalised. Therefore, the present study focuses on these voices in the case in Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

Location can be influenced by the individual's socio-cultural, economic, geographical or historical position (Mcleod, 2004). Post-colonial feminism is sensitive about the local readings of women's lives within the global context (Bose, 2005). In the present study there are adult centres in urban and rural areas, thus in different locations.

Post-colonial scholars give differing answers to the sources of inequalities based on cultural, geographic and national location. It focuses on the particular struggles of women of colour, but admits that these pan out differently in different contexts. This levels a critique of the homogenous tendencies of Western feminism that focus on the struggles of white middle-class women, ignoring the plight of women of colour and poor women in the developing world. Contrary to Western feminism, post-colonial feminism wishes to bring into the light the typicality of problems of women of the Third World nations. Anderson (2000: 22) notes, "They are working for the all-round amelioration in the lives of women of post-colonial origin. Post-colonial theory focuses its attention not only on race but on how it interacts with class and gender in interlocking forms of inequalities". A case in point is that apartheid social systems in South Africa had interlocking inequalities built into them. Another important point made by post-colonial feminist research is that research should not only describe the effects of colonialism but also contribute to decolonisation, by supporting the self-determination of indigenous peoples (Smith, 2005).

2.9.4 Post-colonial feminism in education

It is argued by advocates of post-colonial feminism that it simplistic to believe that Western families can represent and justify the stand of women living in once-colonised countries (Anderson, 2000:23). Post-colonial women differ utterly from Western women, so feminists of post-colonial origin should come forward and make differences visible across cultures. If lived experiences and circumstances of women of post-colonial settings are divergent, they should therefore be judged and evaluated as such throughout the world, including South Africa (Kalpana, 2003). The distortion is that Africans possess little or no indigenous knowledge of value that can be used in the process of educational transformation. This same view postulates Western-oriented norms for educational achievement and success for African women. Therefore, research from Western-oriented perspectives often does not try to draw out indigenous knowledge and expand upon it.

In education, post-colonial feminism tries to open new ways of knowing and seeing. The post-colonial feminist researcher has the obligation to generate and communicate knowledge to address and correct past injustices. In summary, Anderson (2000:23) advises that we can maintain that every educational researcher "has the responsibility to address past inequalities but also present inequities".

2.9.4.1 *Strengths and weaknesses of post-colonial feminist thought*

Post-colonial feminist scholars and activists have made an effort to undercut the universalisation of women as a universal category (Mohanty, 2003; Lewis & Mills, 2003:03). Post-colonial feminist theory questions the problematic representation of the Third World, particularly the assumption that they could best be understood as the assumed norm of Western women. The post-colonial feminists also argue that the Western feminists have created a notion of a static or rigid “Third World female entity”, where Western women are still portrayed as the norm and where the norm of whiteness becomes superior (Mohanty, 2003:17). The Western woman is a subject; the Third World woman becomes an object.

Post-colonial feminist theories have provided the analytic tools to address issues of structural inequities in groups that historically have been socially and economically oppressed. These theories allow us to attend to the context of each person’s suffering and consider options for change and to blur the sharp divide between those historically cast in the role of the colonizer and the colonized (Kalpana, 2003)

However, Benerjee (in Banu Ozkananc-Pan, 2012:585) notes that post-colonial feminism in terms of improving theory, the relational epistemologies alter relative and relativist ways. These positions therefore highlight challenges and confusions in how identities form rather than offering historic cultural analogies. Based on the experience of Banu Ozkananc-Pan (2012:585), these comparisons were at times what mainstream journal editors and reviewers wanted to see in articles despite claims to be open to substitute and inclusive procedures. As Bhabha (in Banu Ozkananc-Pan (2012:585) further notes, the problem emanates from the very notions of ‘alternative’ and ‘inclusive’, which have not solved the problems of lack of representation but rather have offered a statement that is assumed to be true and from which a conclusion cannot be drawn. Nevertheless, post-colonial feminist approaches offer an involvement with multiple gender, ethnicity and class relations as part of the research agenda aimed at critique, recovery and activism. In sum, as Java (in Banu Ozkananc-Pan, 2012:586) attests, post-colonial feminist frameworks stress how theory, research and writing are political engagements.

These frameworks alter both feminist perspectives to understanding and representing Third World people: being a researcher interested in inclusion and equality requires an ethical commitment to decolonizing ways of seeing, doing and writing. I endeavour to make a contribution on this score and thus to increase the corps of literature that relates to post-colonial contexts.

2.9.4.2 Relevance of post-colonial feminist thought to the study

The post-colonial perspective provides insights for this study in three ways. First, it suggests listening to various women's voices on factors that cause gender disparities, as they experience them without universalising the women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Research into oppression under patriarchal dominance has made women visible in a way that more accurately reflects their actual situations. The post-colonial perspective encourages researchers to look at the individual complexities that characterise the particular contexts within which these women are situated, particularly along the lines of class, culture, ethnicity, age and race including geographical location. This study taps into these complexities in this context by delving into the experiences of participants in the selected Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

Secondly, post-colonial feminist theory can provide a powerful critique of development, not only for the women in once colonised countries, but also in non-colonised countries. Post-colonial feminist theory raises important questions about the moral and ethical imperatives of improvement inherent in development processes where gender equality is integral to development (Spivak in Harcourt 2016). A post-colonial feminist perspective is especially important for those who engage in the process of development as experts including researchers as women. Acknowledging the situatedness of our own knowledge prior to conducting an interrogation concerning the implications of what its constituent factors mean for ourselves and women in different contexts (Spivak in Harcourt, 2016) may enable us to acquire a more distinctive understanding of local politics than would be possible otherwise (Harcourt, 2016). This study therefore does bring my situatedness into the discussion as I played a part in bringing to the fore issues relating to gender disparities as experienced by the participants.

Thirdly, post-colonial feminism emphasises people's reflective engagement with the world to expose the hidden assumptions to improve overall human conditions. The theory impacts on the way the researcher thinks about the research problem and the questions asked by the researcher about the issue being researched. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:2) claim that every attempt to make sense of the world around us begins with our notions, conceptualisations and theories about it. In the case of analysis, researcher engagement in judgements regarding what patterns s/he intends to use and how s/he goes about separating and examining these patterns cannot be denied.

In doing so, the assumptions underlying such an engagement, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2005:2), are that our different ways of seeing and thinking about a phenomenon determines what we see and how we interact with participants. Therefore, great care should be taken in delineating the perspectives that we bring to our work as researchers as these perspectives inform the manner in which we do research, that is, our research methods and our way of engaging in the study. As such, I believe that post-colonial feminism provides this study with an important foundation for addressing the problem with which this study is concerned, namely, common factors experienced as perpetuating gender disparities in the Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. The way of doing this study is not premised on value-freedom, but on a concern with investigating the issue under consideration. This foundation enables me to identify experienced disparities with participants, and strategise to change the power relations in society, especially in this case working in the Department of Higher Education and Training. In light of this, I seek to recommend ways in which the Centres could assist in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. As such, post-colonial feminism represents a useful lens for both critiquing injustices and envisioning and creating a more just world.

An implication of this is that teachers teaching for empowerment should be able to examine knowledge both regarding the way knowledge misrepresents particular views of the world and regarding a deeper understanding of how the students' world is actually constructed. Knowledge generation, in this case in Community Learning Centres contexts, should have a more indigenous goal and create the conditions necessary for students' self-determination in larger society.

In conclusion, then, these concerns of post-colonial feminism, as well as the discussion on the origins and background of post-colonial feminism, imply that post-colonial feminism is situated to address the research problem of the present study, namely, considering critically the role of Community Learning Centres in relation to experienced gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. The way that post-colonial feminism reveals its appropriateness and relevance to the present study is discussed in the ensuing section.

(1) Empowerment: Third World women as agents

One of the main arguments put forward by postcolonial feminist theorists is that women in the Third World or developing countries are active agents, not passive victims. However, when approaching the Third World from a Western perspective, the agency of women is not understood or recognised. For example, Spivak (in Harcourt, 2016) points to the role of women who have taken part in organising and inciting national revolutions. Since women are understood as active agents in post-colonial feminist theory, the main focus is on women to decide what empowerment means and how to achieve it. Empowerment should not be guided by Western norms. As Kabeer argues, “Put what people think about, dream about, care about, and start from there” (Kabeer 2000:22). This is what this study incorporates as its stance.

(2) Empowerment: The relationship between men and women

Another aspect of empowerment within postcolonial feminist theory is that the relationship between men and women is not necessarily one of conflict (Lewis & Mills). Rather, men and women cooperate. For instance, in societies where racial oppression prevails, men and women might have shared interests in fighting discrimination (Lewis & Mills, 2003:5). Women are not automatically assumed to be empowered relative to men. Thus, the research design in this study did not exclude men as participants in order to share their experiences in the context of mixed focus group sessions

(3) Empowerment: Collective organising

Further, focus is more on how women become empowered collectively rather than as individuals in isolation. It is argued that the community plays a crucial role in empowering women (Klouzal, 2003:259).

Within a community, women have the opportunity of talking with others and thereby get a better understanding of their problems (e.g., violence or discrimination) as well as getting emotional support from other people (Klouzal, 2003:260). Mohanty (1995) points to how it is by cooperating with other women that poor women will be empowered. For instance, women who work in free trade zones live, work together, share dreams, and support each other by using collective strategies. These strategies include lowering the production targets or helping the women who cannot meet them (Mohanty 1995:24). This argument is related to the way post-colonial feminist theory puts emphasis on cultural and social aspects rather than on economic aspects. Women will not be empowered just by entering the public sphere and earning money. This focus also is included in the research methods of the present study, which relied on focus group discussion for people to consider collective strategies with an attempt of mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

Finally, post-colonial feminism provides alternative strategies in coping with deviations from any supposed broad solidarity. Differences and commonalities exist in relation to and in tension with each other in all contexts (Mohanty, 2003:224). By engaging in critical analysis, the experiences of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape become relevant for understanding and transforming the experiences of poor women elsewhere. Hence the study may have broader significance.

2.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an overview of the literature and extant research on the role of adult basic education in mitigating gender disparities. In this regard, conceptions in adult basic education, such as empowerment, equity and social justice and democratic citizenship were discussed and their relevance to the present study highlighted. In providing an overview of the research that has already been conducted on the role of community learning centres in mitigating gender disparities, attention was drawn to community learning centres and the theoretical underpinnings that have undergirded this research. In the next chapter, the research design employed is discussed to address the question on which this study focuses.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented an overview of studies that have already been carried out on the role of adult education in mitigating gender disparities. The research problem that this study focuses on is that adult education is tasked to promote equity and redress, yet in its present form does not seem to help people to mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. In addressing this problem, the following research questions were posed:

- 1 What are the common factors that perpetuate experiences of gender disparities in the Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape?
- 2 How are gender disparities experienced as impacting on the socio-economic development of women in the Community Learning Centres in Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape?
- 3 What possible strategies can be initiated in the Community Learning Centres to assist people to mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape?

In order to respond to the research questions the present study set out to Investigate what Community learning Centres are doing (if anything) in assisting people to mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

In doing so, the present study directed its attention on the following objectives:

1. To explore common factors that perpetuate experienced gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape with special reference to their perceptions;
- 2 To explain how gender disparities are experienced as impacting on the Socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape;

- 3 To recommend possible ways in which the Community Learning Centres could assist people in mitigating gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

In the light of the above, this chapter discusses the research design, research paradigm and research methods used to address the research questions posed by the present study.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

There is no single blueprint for planning research. A research design is controlled by the strength of purpose. In other words, a research design acts as a bridge between the theoretical discussion of the opening chapter and the subsequent chapters that cover specific styles of research, specific in planning a research design such as, for example, sampling, reliability and ethics. Further, the research design helps with planning methods of collecting data and data analysis. "The intention is to provide a set of issues that need to be addressed in practice so that an area of research interest can become feasible and capable of being undertaken" (Cohen et al., 2000:73). McMillan and Schumacher (2001:166) define the research design as a plan for selecting the methodology and research methods to respond to the research questions. They note that the goal of a well-grounded research design is to form the opinion that is judged to be credible. According to Durrheim (2004:29), research design is a strategic framework for action that serves to bridge the gap between research questions and the implementation of the research. In the present study, the research design did serve to bridge this gap, but the design was an emergent one in the sense that the exact way of implementing the research emerged during the study. The initial (draft) plan did not include two sets of interviews (on different occasions with each of the three adult educators) and two sets of (four) focus group discussions with the participants from the mixed and homogenous groups. The need for this arose as the study proceeded and I realised after initial analysis that issues required further exploration; hence, another set of individual interviews with the educators and with the focus group participants who had attended the original session was arranged.

3.2.1 Research approach

The topic of exploration in this study is best suited to a qualitative research approach. In addressing this question, I concur with Patton (2002:39) who claims that qualitative research is directed at seeking data which enables participants to express themselves and to guide the research, which is not directed fully by a pre-given hypothesis to be tested. According to Patton (2002:136) the research method of a qualitative study differs from that of a quantitative study “where the hypothesis often literally dictates the form, quality, and scope of the required data”. Quantitative researchers develop techniques that can produce quantitative data usually in the form of numbers; data for qualitative researchers are sometimes in the form of numbers but mostly in the form of words and include written or spoken words, actions, sounds, symbols or visual images (Neuman, 2007:110). This is what the study focused upon, namely spoken words (spoken in the context of one-to-one interviews and focus group sessions).

Neuman (2007:110) highlights that “qualitative researchers are concerned with the subjective world and try to offers insight into social, emotional and experiential phenomena. The aim is to draw an understanding and perceptions to explore social contexts and cultural norms and to understand the linkages between process and outcomes. Quantitative researchers consider and reflect on concepts before they gather any data. Qualitative researchers explore the attributes of settings and culture to understand the connection between process and impacts.

3.2.1.1 Relevance of qualitative research to the present study

Research studies that are qualitative are designed to discover what can be learned about some phenomenon of interest, particularly social phenomenon where people are the participants (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). In other words, qualitative researchers are able to develop a general ‘focus of inquiry’ that helps to guide the discovery of what is to be known about some social phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For example, as Yauch and Steudel (2003: 472) claim, one strength of qualitative research regarding issues of gender inequality, is the ability to probe the experiences, values, beliefs and assumptions to gain insight into problems affecting women.

The other important benefit of the qualitative approach is that the inquiry is broad and open-ended, as such participants are able to raise issues that matter the most to them; the qualitative researcher typically does not have a biased, restricted set of issues to examine. Dudwick, Kuennast, Jones and Woolwick (2006:03) further attest that qualitative research allows researchers to explore the views of homogenous as well as diverse groups of people so as to unpack these differing perspectives within a community. Thus, qualitative researchers have the ability to understand and represent points of view which are often ignored. (Yauch & Steudel, 2003: 473).

In qualitative research, data collection methods involve the collecting of qualitative data such as interviews, documents and interviews in order to understand and explain a social phenomenon. Yauch & Steudel (2003) also note that the purpose of qualitative methods is to generate comprehensive description processes or settings. In other words, qualitative methods are used to answer questions about experience, meaning and perspectives. For example, to understand more about the common factors that perpetuate gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape, I visited the Public Adult Learning Centres but I am also familiar from personal experience with the setting of the Eastern Cape and issues brought up by the participants.

Dudwick, Kuennast, Jones & Woolwick (2006) further note that qualitative researchers have the responsibility to seek relevant data whose relevance changes as the study proceeds. That is, the relevance of what has been said by the participants takes on additional meaning as the study proceeds. In this research my recognition of what needed to be highlighted, based on member checking with participants, came about as an ongoing process of working with data.

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) point out those researchers who employ a qualitative approach are able to make connections between different aspects of people's lives and allow for the discovery and do justice to the perceptions and the complexity of participants' interpretations. This study sought to do justice to these interpretations.

3.2.2 Research strategy

This study followed a phenomenological strategy. Phenomenological research attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

The purpose is to examine uniqueness of individual's lived situations because each person has his or her own reality, but also to understand experiences of reality that are intersubjective as people share ideas with one another (Ngulube & Ngulube, 2017). Reality is thus subjective. Phenomenology has its roots in an existentialist philosophy. Existentialism is a philosophical and cultural movement which holds that the starting point of philosophical thinking must be the individual and that moral thinking and scientific thinking together are not sufficient for understanding all of human experience and therefore, a further set of categories governed by the norm of authenticity is necessary to understand human existence (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004).

3.2.2.1 *Types of phenomenology*

McLaughlin (2003) identifies three types of phenomenology. Descriptive or hermeneutical phenomenology refers to the study of personal experience and requires a description or interpretations of the meanings of phenomena experienced by participants in an investigation. Eidetic or transcendental phenomenology aims at analysing the essence perceived by consciousness with regard to individual experiences. Genetic or constitutional phenomenology refers to the analysis of self as a conscious entity. While analysing the self, this type of phenomenology also refers to the universal consciousness or intersubjective consciousness. In the following section more detail is given on the type of phenomenology that guided this study.

3.2.2.2 *Husserl and the descriptive inquiry*

Husserl's philosophical ideas about how science should be conducted gave rise to the descriptive phenomenological approach to inquiry. Cohen (in Lopez & Willis, 2004) indicated that in this approach, experience as perceived by human consciousness is regarded as an object of scientific qualitative study. An important component of Husserlian phenomenology is that it is important for the researcher to apply prior personal knowledge to understand the essential lived experiences of those being studied (Lopez & Willis, 2004). That is, experience can be studied, as this study indeed attempts to do.

Lopez and Willis (2004) note furthermore that the term lifeworld expresses the idea that individuals' realities are usually influenced by the world in which they live. Another point that was emphasised by Heidegger was that human beings cannot detach

themselves from the world as they experience it. What is studied by phenomenologists then is what individuals' narratives (which they also jointly construct with others in their social world) suggest about human experiences. Guided by these views, this study followed a hermeneutical phenomenology.

3.2.2.3 The relationship between feminism and phenomenology

As stated in the previous chapter this study is underpinned by feminist theory and more specifically post-colonial feminist theory. Fisher (2000) states that various possibilities for a relationship between feminism and phenomenology. Prior to this view, feminism and phenomenology were rarely associated. Studlar (in Baird & Mitchel, 2014) offers an explanation that historically, phenomenology was a representative of male philosophical observation, whereas feminism has concentrated on reconstructing an assumed system rather than being content in explaining it (Reinharz in Baird & Mitchel, 2014). Young and Sandra (in Baird & Mitchel, 2014) have combined phenomenology with feminism to relate interpretive phenomenology to the issue of gender. According to these authors, phenomenology and feminism when incorporated in a study can enhance the general philosophical basis to gain a deeper realisation of the experiences of living in a gendered community or society.

3.2.2.4 Relevance of hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology to the present study

Hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology helps researchers to identify both common and unique experiences as well as the fundamental nature of participants' experiences and interpretations of key features in their lives (Sarantakos, 2005; Bryman, 2008). Further, interpretive phenomenology facilitates an understanding of the lived experiences of women who have been victims of gender disparities. The main objective of this study stemmed from a desire to understand the common factors that perpetuate gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. As such, women will make sense of their world and reveal the cause of gender disparities as they see it from within their own existence and not while detached from it. In sum, the combination of feminism theory and interpretive phenomenology can offer a sensible and political gender-specific map through which experiences of gender disparities are understood (Sarantakos, 2005; Bryman, 2008).

- **Purpose of inquiry**

The purpose of research is to discover answers to questions through the application of research procedures. Research may be classified as exploratory, descriptive or explanatory (Sanders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). Exploratory research aims at revealing aspects of human experience without applying a pre-given hypothesis to the study. Descriptive research aims at providing a description of representation of the factors that pertain or are relevant to the research questions. Explanatory research centres on identifying any causal links between the factors or variables that pertain to the research question and is guided by a definite hypothesis covering the links between variables (Khothari, 2008; Sanders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). This study is exploratory in nature. It attempted to explore the common factors that are experienced as perpetuating gender disparities in Community learning centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape and consider with participants how those instances impact on the socio-economic development of women in this particular district. Exploratory study is suitable as a term to categorise this study because it was characterised by a high degree of flexibility. There is little existing research on the subject matter, as such exploratory research needed to be conducted.

3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A paradigm is a shared worldview that represents the beliefs and values in a discipline and guides how problems are solved (Schwandt, 2001). In other words, a paradigm tries to describe a worldview informed by philosophical assumptions about the nature of social reality. According to Lincoln and Guba (in Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017) a paradigm consists of four elements, namely, epistemology, ontology, methodology and axiology. Epistemology reveals how we come to know something and how we know the truth of reality. Ontology is concerned with the assumptions we make in order to believe that something makes sense or is real or nature of being. Methodology is a broad term encompassing the research design, methods, approaches and procedures used in an investigation. Axiology refers to the ethical issues that need to be considered when planning research. In this study, I selected a post-colonial indigenous methodology as the paradigm to undergird the study because the major paradigms such as positivism, interpretive and critical theories have marginalised African communities' ways of knowing (Mhesuah, 2005).

For example, positivism holds that the scientific method is the only way to establish truth and objective reality. A researcher using a positivist paradigm strives to be a neutral gatherer and objective observer during the research project since a positivist paradigm sees the world as existing externally and objectively. It can only be understood using objective scientific methods (Neuman, 2007: 64). In this view, the researcher is supposed to approach the research study with a value and bias-free epistemological framework. This type of attitude implies that the objects of study are supposed to “speak for themselves” and the researcher’s task is simply to “listen, observe and form knowledge” (Neuman, 2007: 64). With regard to the creation of knowledge, positivist research is therefore simply descriptive of the observed phenomena, leading to the creation of theories, which are testable and could be generalisable (Newman, 2007:64). As noted earlier, this approach has been criticised by many, including the indigenous research paradigm which suggest that it does not give sufficient attention to the way in which researcher’s concerns can legitimately affect the way the study proceeds and the interactions with participants. Positivism is based upon the view that science is the only foundation for true knowledge. It holds that the methods, techniques and procedures used in the natural sciences offer the best framework for investigating the social world. Positivism is objectivist, that is, objects around us have existence and meaning, independent of our consciousness of them (Crotty in Cohen et al., 2000:4).

According to the interpretivists, as Crotty (in Cohen et al., 2000:4) claims, our realities are mediated by our senses; without consciousness the world is meaningless. Reality emerges when consciousness engages with objects, which are already pregnant with meaning. In other words, reality is individually constructed; there are also as many realities as individuals. “Language does not passively label objects but actively shapes and moulds reality” (Frowe, 2001: 185). This means that reality is constructed as meaningful through the interaction between language and aspects of an independent world. However, some critics of the interpretive paradigm contend that in this paradigm there is no space for questioning ideologies because the focus is on understanding behaviour; it does not explain action from the participants’ perspectives but merely accepts them. This therefore implies that although the interpretive paradigm is sensitive to individual meanings that can be build towards broader generalizations (Cohen et al., 2000; Rolfe, 2006:305), the interpretive paradigm has limitations.

Researchers seem to be expected to arrive at exactly the same interpretation as participants and their role in deepening the understandings of participants is not clear (Rolfe, 2006:305).

Critical theories aim explicitly at emancipating the participants. In this instance, emancipation means having the conditions of acquiring the knowledge necessary to make one free. In other words, emancipation refers to the ability to change the world and the structure of government and social relations in ways that increase one's ability to live and develop freely. Critical theories, therefore, encourage people to move in the direction of greater autonomy and self-definition. In terms of encouraging greater autonomy and self-definition, critical theories direct their attention to ideological critique. An ideological worldview is the system of ideas and beliefs that societies have developed to re-describe and hide the real workings of the social order in which they exist. Ideological critique, therefore, has the function of revealing the incorrect and distorted rationalisation of present or past injustices. An example, of such an ideological critique, is to be seen in the case of the belief that women are inferior to men or the belief that women are weaker than men. However, gender oriented ideologies embodied in myths, beliefs and personal statements sometimes contradict each other or are contradicted by the behaviour of individuals Giroux (in Darder et al., 2003:28).

Gillian (in Mortens, 2009) notes that one of the most influential critical theorists is Marx, the German philosopher, who believed that "those who controlled the means of production, that is, the ruling class, also controlled the mental production of knowledge and ideas" (Rolfe, 2006:307). Of necessity, the knowledge produced perpetuates the control of other social classes by the ruling class. Gillian (in Mortens, 2009) argues that most research studies that inform sociological and psychological theories were developed by white male intellectuals based on studying male subjects in the US. Many African Americans argue that research-driven policies and projects have not benefited them, because they were racially biased (Mortens, 2009). In Africa, scholars such as Mshana, 1992 (in Chilisa, 2012) also argues that the dominant research paradigms have marginalised African communities' ways of knowing and thus have led to the design of research-driven development projects that are irrelevant to the needs of the people, a sentiment echoed by indigenous scholars in the West (Fixico, 1998; Mhesuah, 2005).

The ontological position of critical theory in its paradigmatic intent is that social reality is historically bound and is constantly changing, depending on social, political, cultural and power based-factors (Cohen et. al., 2000). True knowledge in this context lies in the collective meaning made by people, which can inform individual and group action that improves lives. Knowledge is constructed from the participants' frame of reference, but related back to class positioning. The relationship between the researcher and the researched ideally involves the transformation and emancipation of both participant and the researcher. With regard to axiology, researchers who adopt a critical paradigm view research as a moral and political activity that requires them to choose and commit themselves to a value position (Cohen et. al., 2007).

However, a post-colonial indigenous paradigm is seen as most relevant to the study, namely, the role of Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape, because the paradigm focuses on the shared aspects of ontology, epistemology, axiology and research methodologies of the disempowered or historically oppressed social groups. According to Wilson (2008), a post-colonial indigenous research paradigm is informed by relational ontologies, relational epistemologies and relational accountability. In a relational ontology, the social reality that is investigated is understood in relation to the connections that human beings have with their surroundings. The thrust of the discussion is that among the indigenous and former colonised societies, people are 'beings' with many relations and many connections. They have connections with the living and the non-living, with land, with earth, with animals and with other beings. There is an emphasis on I/We relationships as opposed to the Western I/You relationship with its emphasis on the individual. Among the Nguni people of Southern Africa, for example, one of the views of 'being' is the conception that '*umuntu ghumuntu ngabantu*' (Xhosa/Zulu version) (Tutu 1999; Chilisa, 2012). An English translation that comes close to the principle is: "I am we; I am, because we are; we are, because I am" (Goduka, 2000); a person is because of others. Communality, collectivity, social justice, human unity and pluralism are implicit in this principle. Reality implies a set of relationships (Chilisa, 2012).

A post-colonial indigenous paradigm also comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational. In this study, knowledge was shared with the participants. (Wilson, 2008:56).

Some of the techniques of gathering methods emphasised by post-colonial indigenous methodology include language frameworks, talk stories, talk circles, and indigenous knowledge systems in general. With regard to axiology, a post-colonial indigenous paradigm emphasises respect for marginalised groups, belief systems and equality in the relationships between researcher and participants. A post-colonial indigenous paradigm therefore is seen as having some commonalities with the values propagated by critical theories, which Jürgen Habermas promoted in his work at the Frankfurt School, where he focused his work on those societal forces that address domination and restrictions of freedom.

As a result, a post-colonial indigenous paradigm seeks to draw on answers from other schools of thought such as Neo-Marxism and critical race theory by directing their attention to an anti-positivist sociology in the sense that the concern is with recording what counts as worthwhile knowledge and how it is generated relationally (Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010).

3.3.1 Promoters of post-colonial indigenous paradigm

Promoters of a post-colonial indigenous paradigm include theoreticians such as Fanon, Said, Spivak and Bhabha. Fanon (in McLeod, 2010) described the nature of colonialism as essentially destructive. Its societal effects, the imposition of conquering colonial identity were harmful to the mental health of the native people who were conquered into colonies. In such society those who are regarded as inferiors should use some strategies in order to get rid of being called “other” (Bhabha in McLeod, 2010). Stereotyping leads to us to imagine people in terms of stereotypes that we apply and we then do not explore, with them, their actual ways of seeing and experiencing their worlds.

3.3.2 Strengths of a post-colonial indigenous paradigm

One strength of a post-colonial indigenous paradigm is that it promotes diversity in research. African indigenous scholars, students and non-indigenous researchers and scholars can benefit from exposure to the diversity of research paradigms ranging from the dominant Euro-Western paradigms to the historically indigenous research paradigms.

In recognition of this need for this diversity, there is a call for a fifth paradigm (Bantu, 2013; Chilisa, 2012; Romm, 2015; Russon, 2008; Wilson, 2008) to add to the typology of the current four Euro-Western paradigms, namely, post-positivism, constructivism, transformative and pragmatic. This view also provides indigenous people with the right to self-determination, not only from a political or economic point of view but also in respect to research in which they are involved (Porsanger, 2002).

A post-colonial indigenous paradigm advocates for the notion of accountability, which is an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility as well as the notion of respect and most of all, the notion of thorough knowledge of indigenous traditions and languages. By so doing, the paradigm calls for insider researchers to acknowledge people's interests, experiences and knowledge at the centre of the research methodologies (Rigney in Porsanger, 2002). Chilisa (2012) adds that a relational ethical framework found in the post-colonial indigenous paradigm invites researchers to see 'self' as a reflection of the researched 'other', to honour and respect the researched as one would wish for oneself and to feel a 'belonginess' to the researched community without being threatened or diminished. A relational ethical framework also requires fairness realised through research that grows from people's needs, experiences and indigenous knowledge systems. This view was expressed in the present study as the research grew along the way, with different occasions of interaction with the participants. This view integrated indigenous understandings with other knowledge systems and tried to promote social relevant research by the people, with the people to address their needs.

A post-colonial indigenous paradigm advocates for a holistic approach in research where the researcher and the researched grow together. The holistic approach found in a post-colonial research paradigm allows the researcher to approach research with the use of varied methods to meet the diverse needs of the researched. Muller (2000) also argues that approaching research holistically is based on the premise that each participant in research will find an identity in, and meaning and purpose of the research through a connection with other participants in a natural setting and the exercise of humanitarian values such as compassion and peace.

The relational epistemology of a post-colonial indigenous methodology expresses African indigenous ways of knowing which entail the ways and practices of doing and the networks, relationships, connections and systems that make up and inform the

reality that can be known and how it can be known. Elsewhere (Chilisa, forthcoming) it is noted an Afrikology epistemology derived from the African cosmology of connectedness and spirituality, promotes harmony and balance as well as critical inquiry and 'fearless aspiration for new paradigms' (Bantu, 2013:06). It derives its assumptions from the 'we-ness' and 'us-ness' (Nyasini, 2016), the I/we relationship and also a universal relational epistemology that cuts across and goes beyond geographic bordered forms of eurocentrism (Nabudere, 2011).

Having discussed the origins of and background of a post-colonial indigenous paradigm, attention will now be directed to how the post-colonial indigenous paradigm is relevant to the present study.

3.3.3 Relevance of a post-colonial indigenous paradigm to the present study

A central feature of a post-colonial indigenous paradigm is that those people who have been silenced, especially women, become a starting point of inquiry (Anderson, 2000). In this context, adopting a post-colonial indigenous paradigm would give women as the participants in this study the liberty to express themselves with their mother tongue and represent the voices that have been marginalised in the past and present, and allow them to shape the future. The decolonisation process of indigenous societies is a way of empowerment and self-determination. It is therefore crucial for participants to reconnect themselves to their cultural concepts, values and knowledge systems in order to be self-governing intellectually.

A post-colonial indigenous paradigm is a culturally specific discourse in this study namely, the role of Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape because it is based on indigenous people's premises, values and worldviews. McConaghy (2003: 231) argues that the notion of 'speaking with' reflects a concern for an inclusionary politics of representation. It also implies an "us" who speaks with, and a "them" who is spoken with. However, Pettman (in Kovach, 2009) also suggests that the notion of 'speaking from' acknowledges the fact that we all speak from somewhere. Speaking from also reminds us to consider our own socio-historical, locations and our motivations for seeking out a partnership relationship. In relation to the research in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape, this research calls for more partnership-based research between the researcher and the researched.

Indigenising research involves ensuring that research methodologies are clearly articulated and respectful of women's multiple burdens (McConaghy, 2003). Adopting a post-colonial indigenous paradigm would give women control over the research being conducted in that they would determine their involvement in interviews in ways that suit them. Furthermore, partnership and dialogue are also emphasised between the researcher and the researched to promote and encourage a greater understanding of acceptance of community perspectives and realities about their life and gender disparities in their own context. Building on this view of indigenisation, as McConaghy (2003) points out, means that those closest to the consequence of research are encouraged to be the most involved in decision-making and researchers have the responsibility to facilitate this process.

With regard to gender disparities this means that when men and women relate to each other in a dialogue or in partnership, they will start to identify their differences and commonalities and start to treat each other with respect. Involving women in decision-making would also allow them to collectively organise themselves and challenge the gender disparities that prevail in their communities.

A post-colonial paradigm is, therefore, relevant to this study because it will expand the epistemological and ethical framework available to both indigenous and non-indigenous scholars. Through this detailed analysis and reflection on the different paradigms that can be employed in conducting research, I was able to discover my own purpose for doing research. In so doing, I believe that using a post-colonial indigenous paradigm in this research will encourage women to confront and deal with the oppression that they experience in a male-dominated society in their own way of knowing or culturally specific discourses.

3.4 RESEARCH METHODS

In what follows, I outline the research methods used in this study. As established earlier, one of the aims of this study was to recommend ways in which Community Learning Centres might assist people to mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. The study situated itself within the post-colonial indigenous paradigm where proponents of this philosophical standpoint believe in "dialogical methodologies" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Chilisa, 2012).

Dialogical methodologies are flexible and facilitate dialogue. To meet the expectations and requirements of the post-colonial indigenous paradigm, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions as data collection methods are chosen to collect the necessary research data.

3.4.1 The interview method

According to Kvale (1996:174), an interview is a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewees, “whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the life world” of the interviewee with respect to interpretations of the meanings of the described phenomena. Gray (2009:370) points out that a well-conducted interview yields rich data on people’s views, attitudes and meanings that ground their lives and behaviours. It also empowers the participants by giving them a voice. According to Gubrium and Holstein (in Gray, 2009:370), there are three fundamental types of research interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. These types apply to both individual and group interviews. Structured interviews are organised around a set of predetermined direct questions and require immediate responses, mostly “yes” or “no” type responses. Thus, in such an interview, the interviewer and interviewees could have little freedom. It can also be argued that this type of interview is similar to the self-administered quantitative questionnaires in both its form and underlying assumptions. In other words it does not necessarily produce rich data.

The second type of interview is the unstructured interview. Gubrium and Holstein (in Gray, 2009:370) point out that unlike the structured interview, this kind of interview is an open situation through which a great flexibility and freedom is offered to both Sides, that is, the interviewers and the interviewees, in terms of planning, implementing and organising the interview content and questions. Therefore, the interviewer here would be more eager to follow interesting developments up and to let the interviewee elaborate on various issues (Dornyei, 2007:136). Third is the semi-structured interview, which is a more flexible version of the structured interview as it allows more information to be achieved by providing an opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand the interviewees’ responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2005:88). When undertaking such interviews, researchers recommend using a basic checklist (Berg, 2007), that would help cover all the relevant research questions formulated by the researcher.

The advantage of such a checklist, as Berg (2007:39) claims, is that it allows for in-depth probing while permitting the interviewer to keep the interview within the scope mapped out by the aim of the study.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher chose semi-structured interviews because they allowed various issues concerning this study to be covered. Semi-structured interviews are preferred participants are given a chance to base their responses on their experiences and critique important matters which affect them, rather than the researcher imposing his/her own perspectives on them. Semi-structured interviews are also relevant in this study because they allowed the interviewee to develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by me, while allowing me to obtain rich data from the adult participants involved in this study. Patton (2002 in Gray, 2009:384) contends that in order for interviews to be successful, the use of a voice recorder for interviews is recommended. However, this only took place in this study when participants agreed to their interviews being recorded. The audio recordings captured participants' perceptions and their construction of reality and allowed me to concentrate on the interview process, which required me to listen, interpret and refocus the interview at the same time (Gray, 2009:385).

3.4.1.1 Advantages of interviews

The advantages of interviews are considerable. They not only allow the interviewer to collect first-hand information but emotional data as well. Interviews are suitable for both the literate and illiterate, because they permit clarification of questions, and they have a higher response rate than written questionnaires (Gray, 2009: 339). According to Cohen et al. (2011: 270), interviews are most suitable in instances where the researcher wants to gather information that has a direct bearing on the research objectives. Semi-structured interviews produce rich data. With respect to the present study, valuable insights were obtained from these interviews. Semi-structured interviews promote the significance of giving participants a voice to express their views on critical issues that concern them. Individual semi-structured interviews also allow for opinions and ideas to stem from one source, making it easier to transcribe the recorded interview when it entails one's voice being recognised (Descombe, 2010:183).

Berg (2009:166) points out that in face-to-face interviewing, researchers can also observe and explore participants interacting and sharing specific attitudes and experiences. In other words, interviews permit a more detailed pursuit of content information than is possible in a focus group session.

Blaxer, Hughes and Malcolm (2006: 172) add that it is worthwhile doing interviews because they offer an opportunity to uncover information that is probably not accessible using techniques such as a questionnaire and observations. Moreover, they further point out that interviewing is not merely a data collection tool; it is rather a natural way of interaction that can take place in various situations (Blaxer et al., 2006:177). Mutual understanding can be ensured, as the interviewer may rephrase questions that were not understood by the interviewees. The data can be recorded and reviewed several times by the researcher when necessary to help with producing an accurate record of an interview (Berg 2007). This was also aided by member checks as discussed earlier.

3.4.1.2 *Disadvantages of interviews*

One limitation of semi-structured interviews is that inexperienced interviewers may not be able to ask appropriate questions. If this is the case, some relevant data may not be gathered. Moreover, inexperienced interviewers may not be able to probe a situation (Berg 2007). For example, if the respondents do not know what is meant by the reference to gender disparities, they may not be able to answer the research questions posed to the participants in pursuing the objectives of the present study, Descombe (2010:184) observes that how people respond differently in an interview depending on how they perceive the interviewer. In particular, the sex, the age and ethnic origins of the interviewer have a bearing on the amount of information interviewees are willing to reveal. Keeping these drawbacks in mind, I addressed the limitations as follows: I used interview that build rapport and trust to an extent that the participants expressed themselves freely with regard to their knowledge, values, preferences and attitudes (Arksey & Knight in Gray, 2009:375). In the light of these procedures, I was able to create an atmosphere of trust by making participants feel relaxed and free to reveal their opinions and experiences. Member checking was also used as an additional aid to enable participants to check my interpretations of their statements.

Having discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the interview method of collecting data, attention will now be directed at the focus group discussion, which was used as another method of collecting data in the present study.

3.4.2 Focus group discussions

The other method that was used to collect data from the participants in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape was the focus group interview. Focus groups unlike individual interviews provide the added dimension of the interactions among members. In conducting the focus groups, the emphasis was placed on the interaction among group members. Berg (2009: 167) describes focus groups as an interview method designed for small groups of individuals put together by the researcher. Because interactions between group members largely replaces the usual interaction between the interviewer and the subject, greater emphasis is placed on the subjects' perceptions in focus group discussion as well as on their sharing ideas with one another. This study used focus group discussions to obtain rich, thick data from the participants in the study. The focus group discussions centred on adult learners' day to day experiences pertaining to their interpretation of gender disparities as well as their knowledge, attitudes and beliefs on the role of Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Four focus groups were conducted: two consisted of only women and two groups were mixed. I made use of focus group discussions where my role was to facilitate interaction within the group of adult learners who had knowledge regarding the possible role of Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. In order to ensure that this knowledge was tapped into, interviews with the three adult educators were undertaken at different points in time. Twenty four adult learners' participated in focus groups. Four groups participated in focus groups: two were mixed and two were women-only focus groups and questions asked varied.

3.4.2.1 Advantages of focus group discussions

For adult learners, focus groups are relevant to study because they allowed me to describe and interpret reality from various approaches because the discursive interactions between participants facilitated the expression of personal experience.

This therefore constituted to richness in identifying behaviour and values whereby women interpret gender disparities and how these instances could be mitigated, while also eliciting the views of men in the course of the discussion.

In focus groups, men and women gather to discuss issues of concern and it is possible that they will identify their differences and commonalities and improve their relations in everyday life. Further, by participating in focus groups, women will also stand together or collaborate, analyse their concerns and take action to challenge gender disparities in their communities. In practice, it is difficult to take a single vision because action continually encourages the participants to collaborate and challenge the structures that continue to marginalise them in everyday life.

Marshall and Rossman (2006) and Salkind (2008) point out that focus groups are highly flexible in terms of the number of participants, groups, costs and duration. By utilising focus group discussions, the researcher is able to gather a large amount of information from potentially large groups within a short period of time and the data collected are more likely to be generalised. Punch (2005:171) also attests that when participants are stimulated to discuss certain topics, the group dynamics can generate new thinking about a topic which can result in a much more in-depth discussion. In this regard, adult learners in the present study were encouraged to explain the key factors that perpetuate gender disparities as well as the impacts of those gender disparities. Cohen et al. (2011) point out that focus groups are more likely to provide in-depth information that might be useful to resolve seemingly conflicting information because the researcher has the direct opportunity to ask about the apparent conflict. Thus, the researcher can generate important insights into topics that previously were not understood.

3.4.2.2 Disadvantages of focus groups

One of the disadvantages of focus group discussions is that some participants may be reluctant to participate while other members can dominate discussions because of their power or differences in status (Punch, 2005:175). To overcome this limitation, I dealt proactively with dominant participants by telling the participants that every individual has an important contribution to make, therefore it was important to obtain a balanced representation. Cohen et al. (2011:437) contend that another disadvantage of focus groups is that they tend to be small and, as such, less information can be gathered in comparison with other means of data collection such

as surveys. To overcome these limitations, I triangulated the data collected from the focus group discussion with the data collected by means of other techniques such as the semi-structured interviews.

Having discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion with regard to collecting data, the discussion to follow details the selection of the population for the study, the sample selection and sampling procedures, data collection procedure, and data analysis procedures taken up in the present study.

3.4.3 Population

Participants in this study were adult learners (males and females) and adult educators. There were two traceable Community Learning Centres in urban centres and two Community Learning Centres in rural area. From this population of Community Learning Centres, two were purposely selected for the study: one in urban centre namely, Xola Community Learning Centre, and one in a rural area, namely, Zodwa Community Learning Centre. Participants in this study were men and women chosen on a voluntary basis from these centres. There were the twenty adult learners, four (4) men and sixteen (16) women in Xola Community Learning Centre. Three men and ten women volunteered to participate in focus group discussions. There were sixteen (16) adult learners in Zodwa Community Learning Centre, three (3) men and fourteen (14) women. Two (2) men and nine (9) women volunteered to participate in Zodwa Community Learning Centre. They were all adult learners who did Grade Ten, Eleven and Twelve. As far as the adult educators are concerned there were three (3) adult educators in Xola Community Learning Centre, two (2) females and one (1) male. Two (2) adult educators, male and female volunteered to participate in individual interviews. In Zodwa Community Learning Centres, there were two adult educators, one male and one female. The female adult educator volunteered to participate in the study in Zodwa Community Learning Centre. These participants were assumed to have experienced the phenomenon of gender disparities in their communities and in their learning environments. As mentioned earlier, gender disparities are felt differently by women. In other words, gender disparities vary from one person to another. The reasons for selecting adult learners in this study is that gender disparities have adverse effects on the socio-economic development of the adult learners, low self-esteem, absenteeism and conflicts between school work and family life (Teppe, 2007)

I chose the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape because I was born in the province. My background, therefore, gave me an opportunity to interact with most adult learners and adult facilitators from the Community Learning Centres, a situation which made it easier to access participants' views on the role of Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in this particular district. Gray (2009:190) points out that the relationship between the researchers and the researched is crucial in establishing genuineness. In this regard, I tried to create an environment conducive to getting honest responses on matters considered as rather personal pertaining to participants' experiences on gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. I decided to involve adult educators and adult learners from Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape as subjects for investigating the role of Community Learning Centres in possibly mitigating gender disparities in the this particular district. The sample in this study was regarded as probably representative of both the urban and rural areas of the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape although in qualitative research one can never know for sure to what extent one can generalise from the sample (the two chosen centres) to the population (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Onwuegbuzie and Leech also note that the time one spends with participants and the number of occasions on which one interacts with each participant lends quality to the data.

3.4.4 Sampling

I conducted four focus group discussions with adult learners, two were mixed and two consisted of women only. Twenty-four (24) adult learners participated in focus group discussions and three (3) adult educators participated in semi-structured interviews in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Smaller sample sizes are common in qualitative studies because the emphasis is on quality and depth of findings over quantity and generalisability (Newing, Eagle, Puri & Watson, 2010). Interviews with educators were held on two occasions and an interview lasted approximately 1 hr 20 mins allowing in-depth discussion to take place. Likewise focus group discussions were repeated (with all the focus groups). Therefore, data collection reached saturation in the sense that all the relevant meanings were explored in depth with the 24 learners. That is, it is unlikely that new data would emerge from further research with these participants (Creswell, 2007)

I adopted purposive sampling to initially choose the centres, namely Xola and Zodwa (pseudonyms) (Merriam, 2000). Ideally, the sample represents the whole population of the Cacadu district Community Learning Centres on the characteristics of interest (Burns & Groove, 2009). According to Cohen et al. (2000), purposeful sampling can be divided into three main types: judgmental sampling, in which the researcher selects only participants who can answer the research questions; snowball sampling where the researcher selects only potential participants for the research; and quota sampling based on quota from each representative group. For the present study I followed judgmental sampling. As this study focused on the role of Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape, it was relevant to include adult learners who attended classes in these centres and adult educators who teach in these centres. In other words, judgmental sampling helped me to choose only participants relevant to the problem being investigated. As far as the actual selection of participants (adult educators and learners), this was done on a voluntary basis as explained also in Chapter One where Kovach's view on relational sampling was outlined. In short, I decided what needed to be known and set out to find people who were willing to provide information by virtue of their knowledge and experience (Patton, 2002; Lewis & Sheppard, 2006). In the next section more detail is given on the actual sampling procedure.

3.4.4.1 Sampling procedures

3.4.4.2 Choosing the Community Learning Centres to participate in the research

In order to select an urban and a rural Community Learning Centre in Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape, I proceeded along the following lines:

Cacadu district has five local municipalities where there are three traceable Community Learning Centres that cater for Grade 10, 11 & 12. Two of these Public Adult Learning Centres are urban-based, called Xola and Tirelo Community learning Centres. Zodwa Community Learning Centre is in a rural setting. I needed to select two centres one in an urban area, and one in a rural area. I searched the internet for Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district where I found two traceable urban centres and one rural centre. I wrote a letter to the Director of Department of Higher Education and Training of the Eastern Cape seeking permission to visit the centres for

the purposes of research and received a favourable response. In order to speak to adult learners and the adult educators with regard to gender issues, I telephoned the centre managers of these centres. I received favourable responses from two centre managers, namely, Xola and Zodwa Community Learning Centres. Xola became the urban centre I visited and Zodwa was the rural centre. The Director of the Department of Higher Education and Training was aware that I had selected an urban centre and a rural centre but was not aware which ones were chosen.

3.4.4.3 Choosing participants from the selected urban centre from Xola Community Learning Centre

My next task was to choose participants who would be willing to participate in the research and to share their experiences in relation to their understandings of gender based issues as experienced in the centres and the community. My initial idea was that focus groups would be a suitable method by which the learners could discuss their experiences and reflect on them together, so that detailed accounts of gender issues and the way in which the learning centres helped to deal with them could be generated.

3.4.4.4 Selection of participants in Xola Community Learning Centre

After the Director of the Department of Higher Learning and Training of the Eastern Cape had granted the permission to the study in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape, I met with the centre managers of the Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape so that they could introduce me to their adult educators. I arrived in the afternoon at Xola Community Learning Centre and the centre manager suggested to me that we should first approach the adult educators: two female adult educators and one male. I told them briefly about the research and asked if they would be willing to be interviewed, to which they agreed. We then asked the learners from the grades being taught at that time (Grades 10, 11 and 12) to join us in a classroom with the adult educator so that I could explain the research to them and ask for volunteers. It was appropriate to have experienced adult learners from these centres because they could reflect well on their learning experiences in relation to gender issues over time.

Learners from Grade 11 were not available at the time because it was end of the year and they were occupied with yearly examinations, but once the Grade 11s were in Grade 12 in the following year, I returned to them in February 2017. I was involved with this exercise initially in November 2016 and then returned again in the following year, February 2017 to complete the exercise.

I asked the adult learners if they were willing to participate in a mixed focus group session, where we could all explore in more depth gender issues in Community Learning Centres and their communities. I mentioned that a mixed group would allow male and female input into the discussion in terms of their way of relating and their understanding of possible gender disparities in the community and the classes. I also thought that a stimulating discussion would ensure in-depth data as the different genders engaged with each other around their understandings and experiences. Therefore, I chose to organise what is called a non-homogenous group discussion in the first instance to gain information and knowledge I would not get in women-only groups. Diversity is also good for focus groups because it brings different perspectives.

Twenty learners were present: four men and sixteen women. Three (3) men and ten (10) women volunteered to take part in this initial mixed group discussion for which an arrangement was made for a suitable date. I also told them that it was possible that we could also hold a discussion later in a non-mixed context. The gender composition of the group more or less matched the composition of learners at the centre, as there were far more women than men. I decided that I could run the group with 13 people, although some authors suggest focus groups should be limited to less than 13. But because only three men had agreed to participate, and because I wanted the group to be mixed, I felt that this would be the best way to handle the situation, so that the group had enough male participants. Ten women participated in women-only focus groups.

In short, the participants and mode of participation from Xola Community Learning Centre consisted of:

- 13 learner participants (volunteers) – 3 men and 10 women in a mixed focus group; the 10 women then participated in a homogenous (women-only) focus group.

- 2 adult educator participants, a male and a female: individual interviews were held with the two educators who taught Grade 10, 11 and 12.

It should be noted that in this sampling process, it was not me alone choosing participants and way of proceeding, but also participants were involved in this process. The additional focus group session consisting of only women was based on participant preference.

3.4.4.5 Choosing participants from the selected rural centre from Zodwa Community Learning Centre

In the case of Zodwa Community Learning Centre, as indicated earlier, I selected the rural area public centre on the basis that this centre manager responded favourably to my calls and was eager to meet, requesting that I conduct research in the centre. I telephoned both centre managers and only this one gave a favourable response.

From this centre I sought participants from Grades 10, 11, and 12 for the focus group sessions to discuss their experiences at the centre and I invited the adult educator to participate. I thought that they would be able to reflect on how they viewed the Public Adult Learning Centre to address issues concerned with gender disparities which they have experienced in their community.

3.4.4.6 Selection of participants in Zodwa Community Learning Centre

I invited one female and one male adult educator teaching these grades to a discussion where I explained the purpose of the research and solicited their interest in participating in an interview to be held later. I also invited the adult learners to a session where I could likewise explain the purpose of the research. The female adult educator volunteered to participate in an individual interview and eleven adult learners also volunteered. The procedure followed a process similar to the Xola Community Learning Centre except that in this case the learners spontaneously suggested a mixed group and a female-only group before I suggested it. Again, the participants decided on what they preferred and it was not only my choice as researcher.

At this centre Grades 10, 11 and 12 did not all attend the classes on that day. There were 16 adult learners (2 men and 14 women). Of these, two men and nine women volunteered to form a mixed focus group.

Further, all nine women agreed to join the women-only group. One female adult educator participated in a semi-structured interview.

In summary, at Zodwa Community Learning Centre, participation was as follows:

- Adult learner participants: 2 men and 9 women (participated in a mixed focus groups;
- The 9 women then also participated in women-only focus groups;
- 1 female adult educator (who was interviewed)

The mixed focus group session was conducted first and on a different day than the women-only one. In line with Onwuegbuzie and Leech's (2007) considerations of 'persistent' participation.

3.4.4.7 Gaining access to the participants

To gain access to the participants, formal letters were written to the director of the Department of Education requesting permission to conduct semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with selected participants. Centre managers were also contacted to help with choosing individuals for the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. It is a requirement according to the law for every researcher seeking to do research in South Africa or about South Africa to ask for permission from the Department of Education before they engage in the research process. The director indicated her willingness to cooperate, both for semi-structured interviews and for focus groups. My application for informed consent was also granted by the UNISA College of Education, after which I contacted adult facilitators and adult learners in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Letters explained the aims and purpose of the research.

All eligible participants were also approached in person and appointments were made in advance with the participants who agreed to be interviewed or to be part of the focus group discussions. The participants selected were briefed about the study, and during the briefing session, the participants were assured that their responses would be held in strict confidence and that they could withdraw from the research project at any time if they felt uncomfortable. Interviews and focus groups discussions were conducted in the afternoon, so that I did not disturb the daily activities of the adult centres in the district.

3.4.5 Data collection procedure

I proceeded by firstly telling the participants the purpose of the research and that I wished to conduct the focus group discussion and individual interviews. The participants were then asked if they were willing to participate under such conditions and if so, they were then requested to sign the consent forms. Once the participants had been identified, each member was called to confirm his or her interest in and availability for the interviews and were provided with time slots and locations for the focus group discussions and individual interviews. In all the interviews, a semi-structured schedule was used (See annexures A and B).

Data collection was done in two phases: In August 2016 I visited the Cacadu district to familiarise myself with the participants and their communities; and November 2016 the data gathering was done. In individual interviews each participant was interviewed twice and the interviews were 1 hour 20 mins in length. Four groups participated in focus groups: two were mixed and two were women-only focus groups and questions asked varied. These were held in safe spaces where the participants felt free to express their views. Private classrooms were used for focus group discussions and individual interviews. In the focus group discussions, participants agreed to be tape-recorded and for notes to be taken. From the onset the participants requested to respond in both English and IsiXhosa, their mother tongue, and this was taken into consideration. Ndimande (2012) argues that the language used in qualitative interviews should be situated within the larger sociocultural context of the inquiry, to affirm and reinforce cultural identities of the research participants, not just of the researcher. Furthermore, decolonizing approaches in research interrupt colonial tendencies at multiple levels, thereby challenging traditional ways of conducting qualitative research. Drawing on past research by several scholars in this regard as Denzin & Lincoln (2000) point out, decolonizing approaches and culturally affirming linguistic choices in research have the potential to return marginalized epistemologies to the center. As a multilingual, indigenous South African researcher, I am able to speak several of the indigenous languages spoken in South Africa. Namely, IsiXhosa my first language and Setswana my second language. Such linguistic skills enabled me to relate better with indigenous adult learners in the Eastern Cape, most of whom do not typically use English in their homes. I conducted the focus groups in English and Xhosa and took notes in English and Xhosa. I also translated the verbal

statements and narratives in English. With regard to individual interviews, adult educators refused to be tape recorded and this was taken into account once the participants confirmed that they had read and understood the consent forms. However, the adult educators agreed for notes to be taken. I requested the participants to speak slowly to facilitate note taking. This arrangement allowed systematic and in-depth probing without distraction.

3.4.6 Data analysis

Creswell (2013:179) claims that the process of data analysis involves organising the data, conducting a preliminary read-through, coding and organising themes that represent the data to form interpretation. In qualitative research, therefore, data collection, data analysis and recording operate as interrelated procedures that are ongoing, rather than as isolated incidents (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:155). I employed the thematic analysis method because it entails exploring the understanding of an issue. Gibson & Brown (2009:126) maintain that thematic analysis refers to the process of analysing data according to commonalities, relationships and differences across data sets. Themes were identified focusing on the way they had been presented as well as the frequency of their occurrences. I familiarised myself with the data by reading and re-reading collected data. To make sense of the participants' words, I went through the data looking for information that could answer the research questions and labelled the relevant responses accordingly.

To speed up coding, I developed a coding framework consisting of a list of codes to which new codes were added as I progressed with the continual development of coding. I abstracted themes from the codes, went through the codes and grouped them to represent common and significant themes. For example, in dealing with the views of adult facilitators and adult learners on the key factors that perpetuate gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape, words were used that were related to the data. The data remaining were grouped together and reviewed to see if they could be added to the categorised data. In this study, I assembled the responses of the research participants based on the themes and categories that were identified. The categories and themes were analysed and interpreted against the background of the aim and objectives of the present study. Thus, as Marshall and Rossman (2006:162) point out, I was cautious in determining how useful the data segments were to support the emerging story.

Finally, the responses from the participants were put into written form (transcribed) and combined in a coherent whole based on the ideas and views they depicted. In this regard, the data were displayed in a constructive format that described a sequence of events in the dominant discourses.

3.4.7 Trustworthiness

Qualitative researchers are not concerned with validity (measured as accuracy) and reliability (measured as that all researchers can find the same data) but with credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba in Anney, 2014; Polit & Beck, 2011)

3.4.7.1 Credibility

Holloway and Wheeler (2010:338) and Macnee and McCabe (2008:424) define credibility as the confidence that can be placed in the quality of the research findings. Credibility also establishes whether or not the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants' original data and relating to their original views. I extended my time in the field to improve the trust of the respondents and to provide a greater understanding of participants' culture and context (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007:238).

The second strategy adopted was member checks. Member checking means that the "data and interpretations are continuously tested as they are derived from members of various audiences and groups from which data are solicited" (Guba, 1981:85). Following from this, data analysis teams, consisting of the adult learners were formed; each team analysed the views of the participants in focus group discussions. Teams met twice to analyse their group's transcripts and then all the four teams met to identify common themes. During both the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, I requested each participant to review the transcribed interviews or discussions to check for the accuracy of the results. The second approach I used was triangulation. Triangulation "involves the use of multiple and different methods, investigators' sources and theories to obtain corroborating evidence" (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007: 239). In this study, different methods were used, that is, the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, to get the views of adult facilitators and adult learners in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

3.4.7.2 Dependability

Dependability involves participants evaluating the findings, interpretations and recommendations of the study to make sure that they are supported by the data received (Cohen et al., 2011; Tobin & Begley, 2000). This study emphasis was on the meanings, experiences and the views of all the participants. Another strategy that was used was step-wise replication. According to Chilisa and Preece (2005), step-wise replication is a qualitative research data evaluation procedure where two or more researchers analyse the same data separately and compare the results. In this study, I collected data which were analysed and compared to improve the dependability of the inquiry. In other words, I looked at the analysed data which was later confirmed by the participants. Teams met twice to analyse their group's transcripts and then all four teams met to identify common themes.

3.4.7.3 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents. It is the interpretive equivalent to generalisability (Bitsch, 2005:85; Tobin & Begley, 2004:392). According to Bitsch (2005:85), "the researcher facilitates the transferability judgement by a potential user through thick descriptions and purposive sampling". This implies that when the researcher provides a detailed description of the inquiry and participants were selected purposely based on their richness of experience, this facilitates transferability of the inquiry. In this study, raw data from individual and focus groups that were collected in the field were kept for cross checking. Further, the findings were continuously compared to one another during the analysis stage to establish categories and themes. Background information together with a theoretical framework on which the study was based was also provided to improve transferability to other contexts.

3.4.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results of an inquiry can be regarded as "confirmed" (Guba, 1981:80). In other words, as Strauss & Corbin (1990:48) note, each interview should be summarised and confirmed with the interviewee to ensure that the summary is a true reflection of what transpired or at least resonates with their

understanding of what transpired. Participants in this study were given a chance to confirm the results. Analysis teams, consisting of the learners, were formed with each team analysing the views of the participants in focus group discussions. Teams met twice to analyse their group's transcripts and then all four teams met to identify common themes. In both the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, I requested each participant to review the transcribed interviews or discussions to check for the accuracy of the results.

3.4.8 Ethical considerations

McMillan & Schumacher (2010:15) point out that since educational research typically involves human subjects, researchers are required to protect the "rights and welfare of the subjects who participate in the study." These authors further point out that many institutions have guidelines for protecting the rights of subjects participating in research studies overseen by these institutions.

Fraenkel, Wallem & Hyum (2012: 483) also note that the literature on ethics emphasises the importance of guaranteeing confidentiality that represents an undertaking by researchers that any information supplied by participants will be used with discretion and not to embarrass or harm them. The aim of the study was provided in the covering letters indicating the request for taping the participants but also indicating that this was not obligatory. I also tried to democratise the process to allow participants to feel free about whether they wanted to participate or not and therefore used the system of volunteering as outlined earlier in this chapter. After the compilation of the research report, I visited the participants with a copy of the research report to confirm the results with them.

3.4.8.1 Informed consent

Cohen et al. (2011:77) claim that the principle of informed consent arises from the subject's right to freedom and self-determination; that is, the right to participate based on the sufficient understanding of what the research is about. During this process participants were informed about all aspects concerning the research which are important before they could make a decision to participate in research. In this study, the written consent of the participants was sought. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their role in the research.

The covering letters to the participants indicated the request for tape recordings in the collection of data, participation was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time they wish.

3.4.8.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality deals with the disclosure of the information supplied by the research participants. Patten (2009:25) points out those researchers have an obligation not to disclose the information to others. In this study participants were informed that their views and opinions expressed in the interview would not be disclosed.

3.4.8.3 Privacy

Cohen et al. (2011:91) state that the right to privacy is the individual's right to decide when, where, to whom and to what extent his or her attitudes, beliefs and behaviour will be revealed. In this study, I sought the informed consent of the participants so that the data gathering process occurred with their full knowledge of what was involved. In semi structured interviews the participants did not want to be taped but notes were taken. In focus group discussions participants agreed to be taped and were taped.

3.4.8.4 Anonymity

To meet the principle of anonymity in this study, the collection of data was done in such a way that I could not link specific information with the individuals who provided this information (Ruane, 2005:19). I ensured that all names of participants were removed and that pseudonyms were used in writing the reports. Community Learning Centres were also referred to by pseudonyms: Xola Community Learning Centre and Zodwa Community Learning Centre.

3.4.8.5 The right to withdrawal

The right of participants to withdraw means that participants are free to withdraw from the research process at any time. Creswell (2009:12) states that it is important that the participants should be informed that they have the right to refuse to participate in a study and can withdraw at any time. In this study, participation was voluntary and the participants were free to withdraw from the study if they so desired.

3.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the research design used in gathering the necessary data needed to address the main research problem on which this study focused. The research approach adopted was qualitative using a phenomenological research strategy. A post-colonial indigenous paradigm was adopted to undergird the study. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used as methods for the collection of data. The chapter included discussions on the research population, sample and sampling procedures, participant selection, data collection procedures, data analysis, and ethical considerations. The next chapter will present the findings and discussions accruing from the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions that were conducted in selected Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research findings and discussions of the research that was conducted investigating the role of Community learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu District of the Eastern Cape. The research question on which this study focused was whether Community Learning Centres play a significant role in assisting people to reduce gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. The following sub-questions were posed in this study, namely:

1. What are the common factors that perpetuate experiences of gender disparities in Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape?
2. How are gender disparities experienced as impacting on the socio- economic development of women in Community Learning Centre in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape?
3. What possible strategies can be initiated by the Community Learning Centres to assist people in mitigating gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape?

In setting out to respond to these research questions, the study aimed to recommend ways in which Community Learning Centres could assist in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Accordingly, the following objectives were formulated:

1. To explore common factors that perpetuate experiences of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape with special reference to their perceptions;
- 2 To explain how gender disparities are experienced as impacting on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape;

- 3 To recommend possible ways in which the Community Learning Centres could assist people (men and women) in mitigating gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

The ensuing presentation of the research findings in this chapter are, therefore, in keeping with the research questions and the aims and objectives of the study in the gathering of the required and relevant data by means of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

4.2 PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The presentation of the research findings in this study is divided into:

- A description of the characteristics of participants in the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions;
- A record of the responses that were gathered from the semi-structured interviews held with three adult educators in two Community Learning Centres namely, Xola and Zodwa Community learning Centres;
- A record of the responses gathered from the focus group discussions with twenty-four (24) adult learners.

To maintain participants' anonymity in the semi-structured interviews, adult educators chose pseudonyms for themselves and their centres. These are reflected in Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3.

Table 4.1 Codes for adult centres

CODE	MEANING
PALC-X	Community Learning Centre -Xola
PALC-Z	Community Learning Centre - Zodwa

Table 4.2: Codes for interview responses

CODE	MEANING
IR-X-F-1	Interview response-Xola-Female (Participant 1).
IR-X-M-2	Interview response-Xola-Male (Participant 2).
IR-Z- F-3	Interview response- Zodwa-Female (Participant 3).

Table 4.3: Codes for focus group responses

CODE	MEANING
focus group-X-M	Focus group–Xola-mixed
focus group-X-W	Focus group–Xola-Women
focus group-Z-M	Focus group–Zodwa-mixed
focus group-Z-W	Focus group-Zodwa-Women

4.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

This section focuses on the characteristics and biographic information of adult educators and adult learners who participated in semi-structured interviews in Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Biographical information on the participants in semi-structured interviews was requested to obtain data about gender, area of specialisation, grade taught, professional qualifications and experience.

4.3.1 Demographic profile of adult educators

For the semi-structured interviews, the analysis of biographical data was carried out in terms of gender, age group, professional qualifications and teaching experience.

Table 4.4: Demographic profile of adult educators

Sobriquet	Gender	Programme	Professional Qualification	Experience
Xola	F	NSC	BA & Dip. ABET	Five years
Xola	M	NSC	BA	Eleven years
Zodwa	F	NSC	BTEC & Cert in Adult education	Ten years

4.3.1.1 Gender

Table 4.4 indicates two female adult facilitators and one male adult facilitator who participated in the semi-structured interviews conducted in Xola and Zodwa Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Gender indicated gender representation in these adult centres. The majority of facilitators were women. Gender is important in this study because to improve the relations between men and women, there should be a balanced participation of women and men to assist adult learners to mitigate gender in their daily lives.

4.3.1.2 Programme

All adult educators who participated in this study teach National Senior Certificate (NSC). The National Senior Certificate is the main school-leaving certificate in South Africa. This certificate is also commonly known as the matriculation or Grade 12 certificate. The certificate replaced the senior certificate in 2008.

4.3.1.3 Professional qualification

The female adult educator who taught in Xola Community Learning Centre had a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Diploma in Adult Education, a qualification relevant to facilitate in adult centres. A male adult educator in Community Learning Centre also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree. A female adult educator in Zodwa Community Learning Centre holds a BTech & Certificate in Adult Education. Thus, the qualifications of adult educators varied. A reason may be that it is difficult to get relevant practitioners because the Department of Higher Education hires adult educators on a part-time basis. In terms, of new qualifications framework, none have a professional qualification (depending on the NQF level of the Diploma).

4.3.1.4 Experience

Regarding experience, two adult practitioners had more than ten years of experience, and one had five years of experience. Noting the experience of adult practitioners in facilitating adults was essential to indicate the extent to which preparation of programmes meet student needs and assist women to mitigate gender disparities. The (DECD) (2005) states that, experience matters. However, experienced teachers often resist change and might find it difficult to adopt or shift to new methods of teaching that promote gender equality in their daily teaching. In other words, you might have forty years of teaching and not to do anything to mitigate gender disparities.

4.3.2 Demographic profile of adult learners

Before each focus group discussion, I asked participants a set of planned questions. However, the participants were reminded that the planned questions were to guide the discussion but not to restrict the discussion. My main guiding principle was to enable a smooth flow as much as possible without too much interference while at the same time to keep the discussion on track. Further, in the focus group discussions an analysis of the biographical information on adult learners was conducted to obtain biographical data regarding gender, grade and occupation status.

Table 4.5 Demographic profile of adult learners

Code of PALC	Participant no	Gender	Grade/level	Occupational status
Focus group-X	1	Female	10	Cleaner
	2	Female	10	Food seller
	3	Male	10	Waiter
	4	Female	10	Housewife
	5	Female	11	Petrol attendance
	6	Female	11	Shop assistant
	7	Female	11	Cleaner
	8	Male	12	Domestic worker
	9	Female	12	Cleaner
	10	Female	12	Housewife
	11	Female	12	Domestic worker
	12	Female	12	Driver
	13	Male	12	Unemployed
Focus group-Z	14	Female	10	Unemployed
	15	Female	10	Cleaner
	16	Female	11	Domestic worker
	17	Female	11	Unemployed
	18	Female	11	House-wife
	19	Female	12	Cleaner
	20	Female	12	Food seller
	21	Female	12	House-wife
	22	Male	12	Driver
	23	Female	12	House-wife
	24	Male	12	Unemployed

4.3.2.1 Sex

Table 4.5 indicates that ten (10) females and three (3) males participated in Xola Community Learning Centre. In Zodwa Community Learning centre nine (9) females and two (2) males participated in focus groups. In total, there were twenty-four (24) participants in the focus group discussions. The results therefore indicate more female adult learners who were enrolled in Xola and Zodwa Community Learning Centres. However, numbers in these Community Learning Centres do not seem to target gender parity. Women still drop out of school for many reasons such as early marriage, cultural beliefs and violence within the school and outside the school premises (Forster & Offeri-Ansah, 2012).

4.3.2.2 Grade

Concerning the grade or level represented, six (6) adult learners were enrolled in Grade 10, six (6) in Grade 11 and twelve (12) adult learners in Grade 12. The above table shows more Grade 12 adult learners who participated in this study from Xola and Zodwa Community Learning Centres. The grade or level was important in this study because it might be a useful category to analyse the gender disparities although in some instances may not give us a clear picture in which grades are gender disparities mostly experienced.

4.3.2.3 Occupation status

In Xola Community Learning Centre ten participants indicated that they were employed and three were not employed. In Zodwa Community Learning Centre five participants indicated that they were employed and six were unemployed. These results indicate that the majority of the participants who are employed are in an urban centre. Although the majority of adult learners are employed, most are in low-paying, insecure jobs, such as domestic service, petrol attendants and cleaners. Finding jobs for women is tougher than men.

Having discussed the biographical information of the participants, the next section will focus on the responses of participants from Xola and Zodwa Community Learning Centres who participated in the semi-structured interviews

4.4 RESPONSES OF THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

This section summarises the results of the study with reference to interviews that were conducted in November 2016. Two adult educators, male and female from Xola Community Learning Centre and one female adult educator from Zodwa Community Learning Centre participated in the semi-structured interviews.

4.4.1 Thematic analysis of data

Table 4.6 summarises the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data collected from the semi-structured interviews and upon which the subsequent discussion of the data was organised. In the presentation of these findings, the actual words of the participants as responses in the semi-structured interviews were captured *verbatim* and are indented for ease of identification.

Table 4.6: Emerging themes and sub-themes from semi-structured interviews

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
THEME1: Power and control in the curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Power relations• Inadequate communication of master plan• Content versus the mitigation of gender disparities• Level of gender awareness.
THEME 2: Lack of meeting women's needs and interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of opportunities to compete with men• Employment in low paying jobs• Low self-esteem• Stereotype of career choices
THEME 3: Intervention strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional development of teachers• The inclusion of gender in the curriculum• Collaborative efforts

4.4.2 Key factors that perpetuate experiences of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape

4.4.2.1 Theme 1: Power and control in the curriculum

Under this theme, I report on how adult facilitators in this study responded to the questions on the key factors that perpetuate gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Four sub-themes emerged from this theme, namely: power relations; inadequate communication of master plan; content versus the mitigation of gender disparities and a lack of gender awareness.

(a) Power relations

In both centres, participants were of the opinion that they were not involved in the decision-making process of the Department of Higher Education on the development of the curriculum.

The decision not to involve them curriculum development enabled the state to impose its control and reproduce its power and control over the content of the curriculum. These concerns were demonstrated in the following responses in the semi-structured interviews:

Of course, I feel that adult educators need to be involved during the initial stage of formulation of the curriculum so that they can help match content with student needs, for now, there is no proper communication between the Department of Higher education and us. (IR-X-F Participant 1) we are not involved in the initial stage of the curriculum design and yet, we are the implementers of the curriculum.

Involving us in decision making will help us include problems that affects our learners in our daily teaching such as those of gender inequalities. (IR-X-M Participant 2)

There should be partnership when it comes to curriculum design (IR-Z-F Participant 3)

The above responses indicate that adult educators as curriculum implementers see curriculum as a complicated conversation (Pinar, 2012). As such adult educators as curriculum implementers are aware that curriculum decisions entail issues of power relations (Pinar, 2012). Furthermore, McLaren (in Darder et al., 2003:86) attests that the curriculum represents much more than a programme of study, a classroom text or

a course. Rather, it represents the introduction of a particular form of knowledge. It serves in part to prepare learners for their dominant or subordinate positions in society.

(b) Inadequate communication of master plan

Related to the lack of involvement in the decision-making process in the promotion of the mitigating of gender disparities in Community Learning Centres was an insufficient communication of the master plan to direct adult educators who facilitate adult learners as to how they could mitigate gender disparities. According to the participants, there was no commitment on the part of the Department of Higher Education and Training to mainstream gender issues in the Adult Education curriculum. This conclusion was revealed by the following responses:

We have not received any information on how we can mitigate gender disparities in the teaching of adults so we cannot effectively integrate or infuse gender issues because we do not have any information. (IR- X-F Participant 11)

The curriculum in our Community Learning Centres is silent on gender issues and therefore this belief of discriminating women when teaching continues and becomes a norm. (IR-X-M Participant 2)

I do not remember reading a circular about anything related to gender issues may be adult educators are being told verbally. (IR- X-F Participant 1)

The curriculum in our centres is silent on gender issues and therefore this belief of discriminating women when teaching continues and becomes a norm. (IR-Z-F Participant 3)

When asked further on whether they have a document or guidelines that assist them on how they should mitigate gender disparities in Community Learning Centres, one adult educator lamented:

We do not have any document that guide us on how we can mitigate gender disparities and as such we see no need of integrating it in our daily teaching. (IR-X-M Participant 2)

(c) Content versus the mitigation of gender disparities

When asked whether they sometimes challenge the curriculum content, all the participants in the semi-structured interviews agreed that they valued the content stipulated by the curriculum and refrained from infusing or integrating gender issues in the curriculum content. The following responses confirmed this observation:

I never challenge the curriculum I just teach it the way it is. (IR-X-F Participant 1)

We are evaluated on how our adult learners have performed and not on discussing gender issues, therefore avoiding gender-based issues is necessary. (IR-X-M Participant 2)

When further asked on whether they have a programme or related subject that deals with gender disparities, the adult educators noted that they do not have a specific subject or programme that deals with gender issues. However, they do have a subject that deals with human rights issues called life orientation. This was reflected in the following responses:

Yes, we do have a subject called life orientation that covers issues of human rights, career and career choices. The problem is that as adult educators we do not take this subject serious. (IR-X-M Participant 2)

Life orientation teach learners about democracy and human rights but we hardly integrate gender issues when we tackle these topics. (IR-Z-F Participant 3)

When asked further on why they are not taking the subject seriously. The adult educator in Xola Community learning Centre said:

LO is allocated fewer hours in a week but is regarded as a compulsory subjects to be taken by all the Grade 12. (IR- X-F Participant 1)

These findings indicate that the adult educator's classroom practices and beliefs could also reinforce gender disparities in the classroom unintentionally most failed to challenge gender-stereotyped behaviour. The adult educators' perceptions of gender equity showed that they were gender aware, thus, unaware of specific gender issues. Furthermore, the adult educators seemed to ignore or found it difficult to cover gender issues regularly in their daily teaching.

(d) Level of gender awareness

Another sub-theme that emerged during the semi-structured interviews was the lack of gender awareness when it came to mitigating gender disparities in Community Learning Centres. All three adult facilitators in this study stated that they were not in any way sensitised on gender issues by the Department of Higher Education. These adult facilitators, however, noted that gender awareness was critical in mitigating gender disparities in Community Learning Centres. However, it seems that adult

educators choose not to integrate gender issues although the policy allows them to do so. This concern was given expression in the following responses:

It is difficult to integrate gender issues when teaching our adult learners because we are not sensitized in our Community Learning Centres on gender issues. It is not enough to explain to them. (IR-X-F Participant 9)

As adult educators we feel that there are no gender disparities in our Community Learning Centres because most women are enrolled. When access is achieved we feel our female learners are satisfied with our programmes. (IR-X-M-Participant 2)

It is difficult to change what we cannot see like gender inequality. (IR-X-M Participant 13)

When further asked on whether adult learners sometimes bring complaints to their attention with regard to gender issues, the adult educators noted that adult learners never bring the complaints to them. This conclusion was revealed by the following responses:

Adult learners never share their experiences with us. (IR-X-F Participant)

It looks like members of our communities have normalised the gender issues and do not seem to worry. (IR-Z- F Participant 3)

The adult educators in the semi-structured interviews denied having received any guidelines as to how they could encourage or cover gender issues in their teaching. Interestingly, one male adult educator from Xola Community Learning Centre felt that gender equality does not exist in their centre because women are enrolled in large numbers. The results therefore indicated that these adult educators did not know the difference between equity and equality. Gender equality and gender equity are often used interchangeably but they are not the same. Gender equity refers to the treatment of people according to their respective needs to ensure equal rights, obligations and opportunities; equity recognises that people are born with different strengths, weaknesses, and demands that development practitioners adopt different actions accordingly (UNESCO, 2004).

In what follows are reports on how adult educators regarded the impact of gender in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

4.4.3 Experiences of gender disparities as impacting on the socio- economic development of women in Community Learning Centre in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape?

4.4.3.1 Theme 2: Lack of meeting women's needs and interests

With regard to this theme, I report on how participants in the semi-structured interviews responded with regard to the impact of gender disparities on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Four sub-themes were identified under this theme, namely: Lack of opportunities to compete with men; employment in low paying jobs; low self-esteem; and stereotype of career choices.

(a) Lack of opportunities to compete with men

Data collected on the impact of gender disparities on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape revealed that discrimination against women might result in lack of opportunities available to women. This conclusion was revealed in the following response:

If adult learners are not treated equally, they will believe that there are not many opportunities in society for them to be successful, even if they receive good education. (IR-X-F Participant 1)

The above response was supported by another adult educator who said:

Women will be less motivated to learn and perform well in school because they will know that they are not opportunities available for them. (IR-X-F Participant 3)

Gender disparities do not only affect women but men as well. It makes males to be less competitive because they will be sure that they will be placed in jobs even if they did not perform well in school. (IR-X-M Participant 2)

(b) Employment in low-paying jobs

Another impact of gender disparities on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape that was raised by the adult educators in the semi-structured interviews was that if women are not empowered or imparted with relevant skills, they will end up employed in low-paying jobs. This concern was given expression in the following responses:

Women will not be able to effectively compete with males and as such end up being employed in low unsecured paying jobs such as those of domestic work and cleaner. (IR-X-F-Participant 1)

One of the reasons why most women are not employed in high-paying jobs is that they lack critical skills to compete with their male counterparts. (IR-Z-F Participant 3)

(c) Low self-esteem

The participants in semi-structured interviews indicated a strong relationship between gender disparities and low self-esteem amongst women. Gender disparity impacts negatively on women's self-esteem. These concerns were demonstrated in the following responses in the interview:

Women who are discriminated end up feeling worthless about themselves (IR-X-F Participant 1)

Women may not be willing to try new things or get new skills to change their lives. (IR-Z-M Participant 2)

d) Stereotype of career choices.

All the participants in the semi-structured interviews lamented that women would choose careers that are regarded as feminine such as those of teaching, nursing and social work because of socialisation. The following responses confirmed this observation:

Women will choose career choices that are not challenging such as those of helping people in their communities. (IR-Z-M Participant 2)

Most women will have greater negative effects to pursue careers associated with men. (IR-Z-F Participant 3)

It is true that women may think they will not be successful in careers that are challenging such as those of science and engineering. (IR-X-F Participant 1)

4.4.4 Strategies that can be employed by Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape

4.4.4.1 Theme 3: Intervention strategies

This present study was concerned with suggesting intervention strategies that can be employed by Community Learning Centres to mitigate gender disparities in the Cacadu District of the Eastern Cape. In terms of this theme, I report on suggestions put forward by adult educators in the semi-structured interviews on how Community

Learning Centres can assist in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Three sub-themes were identified from this theme, namely: the professional development of teachers; the inclusion of gender issues in the curriculum; and collaborative participation.

(a) Professional development of teachers

The professional development of teachers as an intervention strategy was regarded by one participant as the major intervention strategy, which should be employed by the Department of Higher Education and Training to empower adult educators on how they could mitigate gender disparities by means of adult learning programmes. The participants suggested that such training should be conducted at all levels of the education sector for the benefit of adult educators and adult learners. These research findings were revealed in the following responses:

If we could go for training, then we would be competent to mitigate gender disparities when we teach our adult learners. (IR-X-F Participant 1)

Professional development is important because it focuses on the content of gender, this will help me know how to reach out to the learners. (IR-X-M Participant 2)

Adult facilitators must attend workshops so that they can learn new methods of teaching and gain information about recent findings in gender research and respected academics must be invited in our adult centres so that they can empower us in various ways of promoting equality. (IR-Z-F Participant 3)

(b) The inclusion of gender in the curriculum

Adult educators were asked, if they were to work in close collaboration with curriculum designers in the Department of Higher Education in the designing of the Adult learning curriculum, which proposals would they put forward? All the adult educators who participated in the semi-structured interviews responded that they would urge for the inclusion of gender in the curriculum from the primary level upwards. This position was confirmed in the following responses:

Yes, we must include gender in our curriculum and treat these issues as a subject from primary level upwards. Gender issues should start at primary level, high school and in Community Learning Centres where we teach, for example, our adult learners should be encouraged to dramatise on matters of gender and have videos that emphasise these issues with the aim of promoting equality between the sexes (IR-Z-F Participant 3)

Women who have achieved academically in their lives should be invited to come to our centres so that they can act as role models to our female students. I think that can motivate our female adult learners. (IR-X-M Participant 2)

There is urgent need for including gender in our curriculum so that we can motivate our female adult learners not to drop out of school. (IR-X-F Participant 1)

(c) Collaborative efforts

The adult facilitators were asked to suggest a plan of action or a project plan that could be implemented by Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities. They suggested that adult learners should collaborate and work together with adult educators to assist in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu District of the Eastern Cape. These suggestions are taken up in the following responses:

To overcome gender disparities as an adult educator, I think adult facilitators must involve parents, religious institutions and members of the community to be part of this project. Where there are gatherings we must talk about gender issues. In schools, our learners must dramatize these matters affecting women and also expose them to videos to show gender-related issues and let them comment on them. (IR-X-F Participant 1)

Reducing gender disparities in Community Learning Centres should not only be the responsibility of adult educators. Where there are gatherings such as in weddings, funerals and rituals we must talk about gender issues and critique some cultural practices that perpetuate gender disparities. (IR-X-M Participant 2)

Both men and women should start respecting each other so that they can identify their differences and commonalities and improve their relations in everyday life. Women also should stand together, analyse their concerns and take action to challenge the structures that continue to marginalise them. (IR-Z-F Participant 3)

By way of conclusion, this section summarised the data collected from adult educators in Community Learning Centres through semi-structured interviews. In the next section, the research findings accruing from the focus group discussions will be presented.

4.5 RESPONSES OF THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

This section summarises the results of the research findings critically examining the role of Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

The focus group discussions were conducted in November 2016 and in July 2018. Twenty-four (24) adult learners from Xola and Zodwa Community Learning Centres participated in focus group discussions in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Two groups were mixed and two groups consisted of women only.

4.5.1 Thematic analysis of data

Table 4.7 summarises the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data collected from the focus group discussions, and upon which the subsequent discussion of the data was organised. In the presentation of these findings, the actual words that were written or spoken by the participants as responses in the focus groups discussions were captured *verbatim* and are indented for ease of identification.

Table 4.7: Emerging themes and sub-themes from mixed and women-only focus groups discussions

Code OF CLC	THEMES	SUBTHEMES
Mixed focus groups (FGX and focus group-Z)	Theme 1: Roles and relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialisation • Gender role stereotypes • Power relations
	Theme 2: Socio-economic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependency in female-male relationships • Less decision-making power • Lack of readiness by women to compete with men
	Theme 3: Intervention strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender sensitization • Improved relations between men and women • integrating gender in the curriculum
Women only Focus groups (FGX and focus group-Z)	Theme1: Roles and relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power relations • Status of women • Hidden curriculum
	Theme 2: Socio-economic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low employment status • Lack of confidence and low self-esteem control over fertility
	Theme 3: Intervention strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capabilities of women must be recognised • Breaking down traditional stereotypes • Women empowerment • Social justice

Having outlined the thematic analysis that emerged from focus group discussions, I report on how the participants responded to the questions from the mixed focus groups in Community Learning Centre in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

4.5.1 Thematic analysis of data

4.5.1.1 Key factors that perpetuate experiences of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape

4.5.1.2 Theme 1: Roles, control and relations

- Under this theme, I report on how adult learners in this study responded on the key factors that perpetuated gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Three sub-themes emerged from the mixed focus group discussions on this theme, namely, the socialisation process, gender role stereotypes and power relations.

(a) The socialisation process

According to adult learners in the mixed focus group discussions, the causes of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape emanate from gender role stereotypes attached to men and women. These sentiments were given expression in the following responses.

As daughters, our parents bring us up safe, and our minds would be programmed to behave in a particular way. We take it and never try to challenge it. (Focus group-X-F Participant 1)

In our community, I would say most women are most lagged behind in Science and related subjects. There is still that belief that electrical engineering and civil engineering are meant for men because the course will make women's hands hard. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 14)

As women, we are expected to come early at home, to cook, look after the siblings and close the curtains. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 15)

Women are scared to be stigmatised because they have pursued the so called masculine careers. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 17)

The above sentiments were supported by an adult learner in another group who said:

It is true that we are still blocked to pursue certain careers in our institutions.

A woman who is interested in civil engineering must prove herself by working harder. My sister is currently pursuing a career in mechanical engineering, and when she wanted to go for an internship, she was blocked. The companies she consulted for Internship told her that they wanted males only. (Focus Group-X-F Participant 1).

When asked whether women perpetuate these gender disparities and are prepared to break with traditional standpoints, women lamented:

We do not challenge these things, we accept them the way there are because our culture expects us to behave in a certain way. (Focus group-X-F Participant 9)

From an early age women are socialised for marriage roles and to be wives, mothers and food providers... We are also raised up to believe that as woman we are inferior to men, our place is in the home. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 23)

Another adult learner in the mixed focus group added:

When I was growing up I was not expected to be like boys. I was always asked to behave like a girl. It was my responsibility to come back from school early to clean the house and cook for my siblings. It was okay for my brothers to come late from school as they wish. (Focus group-X-F Participant 11)

The above responses indicated that socialisation contributes to gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Culture sets roles, behaviours and attitudes that societies define as appropriate for women and men. What it means to be female or male is for the most part determined by the socialisation process.

(b) Power relations

One reason given for the causes of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape was the exercising of power relations in which women are still controlled by men. This sentiment was given expression in the following responses:

A woman cannot be a leader amongst men nor speak to address a gathering where men are present. That will be a sign of disrespecting men. We grew up in families where women were not expected to talk in gatherings. This affects us and we feel men should lead us. (Focus group-X-F Participant 7)

A male adult learner in the mixed focus group supported this view:

Sinamanhla thini o buti a sifani na bantu ababiqhileo. Abafasi a ba soze ba kwasi u yeza e mesebense eyezwa ngo buti. Translation: Women are

not physically strong like men and therefore cannot do hard jobs men do.

(Focus group-X-M Participant

A female adult learner disagreed with this view and pointed out:

It is not true; it is just that culturally women are seen as weak to lead men.

(Focus group-F Participant 12)

Similarly, one female adult learner added:

I had to consult my husband first before coming to enrol in this Community learning Centre. If my husband did not approve it, I would not come. In whatever I do I should consult my husband first. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 20)

Male adult learners had similar views in the mixed focus group and they said the following:

Adifuni umfazi wam aye esikolweni ngoba abafazi abafudileyo baziangela. Kuphinda kuthiwe abafazi abafudileyo abanantlonipho emadodeni abo. Translation: I do not want my wife to go to school because educated women are noisy and claim to know more. Educated women also do not respect their spouses. (Focus group-X-M Participant 3)

Yes, women should not go to school. Once educated they start to undermine their husbands. Women who went to school do not respect their husbands. (Focus Group-X-M Participant 8)

These views were also supported by another male adult learner in the mixed focus group who said:

Abafazi funeka bachaze ebayenini ba bo izizathu zo ba kutheni befuna ufunda. Translation: Women should explain to their husbands why it is important for them to go to school. (Focus group-Z-M Participant 22)

One male adult learner in the mixed focus group said the following:

There are no gender disparities. It is up to the women to stand up and fight for their rights. One other thing is that it is scientifically proven that women are weaker than men because of their body size. (Focus group-X-M Participant 24)

The above responses indicated that issues of power relations prevail in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. The central argument here is that the deeply rooted inequalities that affect women's access to education are a result of power relations that emanate from the male-dominated social and cultural structure (Lindsey, 2005; Ngulube, 2018).

4.5.2 Experienced gender disparities on socio-economic development of women In Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape

4.5.2.1 Theme 2: Socio-economic factors

With regard to this theme, I report on how adult learners in the mixed focus group discussions from Xola and Zodwa Community Learning Centres responded to the impact of gender disparities on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Three sub-themes were identified in this theme. Namely, decrease in bargaining power in the household; less decision-making power; and lack of competition between men and women.

(a) Dependency in female-male relationships

Concerning the dependency in female-male relationships, adult learners in mixed focus group discussions claimed that gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape gave rise to a dependency syndrome among women. In other words, due to lack of resources and income, women lack power in the household and hence remain poor and highly dependent on their spouses or partners for survival. These concerns were revealed in the following responses:

Yes, it is true gender does not affect women only but men as well. If women are poor they will highly depend on their spouses or partners for survival.
(FGX-M Participant 8)

Another male adult learner in the mixed focus group supported this view and added that:

Due to poverty amongst women, men will remain with the burden of raising children alone and consequently, die at an early age because of stress.
(Focus group-X- M Participant 13)

When women are discriminated at home and in schools, they will not have access to control of assets such as buying houses for themselves. **(Focus group-Z-F Participant 19)**

Education means everything to us today because without it we do not get jobs and without a job you achieve nothing. You end up depending on men or your partners for survival. **(Focus group-Z-F Participant 23)**

When women are poor, they will not have access to control of assets such as buying a house for themselves. **(Focus group-X-F Participant 7)**

The above responses indicated that both men and women grasp the importance of education and the possible consequences if women and men are not treated equally. The responses also indicated that gender disparities do not necessarily impact negatively only on women but on men as well. This implies that men acknowledge that women should have the same power in the household just like men.

b) Less decision-making power

When responding to the impact of gender disparities on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape, adult learners in the mixed focus group discussions stated that women who suffered discrimination had less decision-making powers. This was illustrated as follows:

If women are discriminated they might have a limited ability to make decisions about their sexual, health and access to health care and as a result have unplanned pregnancies. (Focus group-X-F Participant 10)

Women will not be able to act on their security needs, as compared to men. (Focus group-X-F Participant 11)

Two female adult learners in this mixed focus group supported these views and said:

Women might not have a say or choice about issues that are important about their lives. For many women, they will not feel that they can contribute in gatherings or in meetings in our community. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 21)

Women will not be able to negotiate their demands and find means of having them met. (Focus group-Z-F Participant, 14)

Most participants in the mixed focus group noted that gender disparities may lead to lack of readiness of women to enter into competition with men with regard to career choices and jobs. These concerns were revealed in the following responses:

Men will not be motivated to work hard because they will know that they will be employed in better jobs even if they do not qualify. (Focus group-X-M Participant 13)

It is true men will end up working in jobs with high titles. (Focus group-Z-M Participant 22)

Women will not compete with men in careers that are dominated by men such as those of science and technology. (Focus group-X-F Participant 10)

Other women supported these views and pointed out that:

If men and women are not treated equally they will shy away from competitive environments and choose jobs where they will feel comfortable. (Focus group-X-F Participant 9).

When women see advertisements of jobs they will not be eager to apply for the positions (Focus group-Z-F Participant 16)

The above responses indicated that when women are not empowered with education and skills, there is little healthy competition between men and women for careers and jobs. Women are then forced to take less demanding, low paying jobs. It is therefore advantageous to encourage women to engage in more competitive behaviour.

4.5.3 Strategies that can be employed by Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape

4.5.3.1 Theme 3: Intervention strategies

This theme reports on suggestions put forward by the adult learners in mixed focus group discussions on how Public Adult Learning Centres can assist in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Three sub-themes were identified under this theme, namely, gender sensitisation; breaking down traditional stereotypes; and improving relations between men and women.

a) Gender sensitisation

Adult learners in the mixed focus group discussions stressed the importance of gender sensitisation. Their responses in this regard follow:

Gender awareness courses for adult learners about gender disparities in Public Adult Learning Centres are required. (Focus group-Z-M Participant 22)

Gender issues should be treated as a subject in Community Learning Centres. (Focus group-X-M Participant 8)

Awareness courses should be facilitated to the adult learners. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 20)

When further asked on whether the Grade 10, 11 and 12 subjects have raised awareness of gender, the participants commented as follows:

We are not taught about gender issues in our subjects. (Focus group-X-F Participant 11)

When asked to identify topics covered in their subjects in Grade 10, 11 and 12, participants said:

We are taught about health issues and the need for lifelong learning. (Focus group-X-M Participant 3)

We are also taught about the importance of human rights and voting in Life Orientation. (Focus group-X-M Participant 8)

Career and career choices are sometimes highlighted as topics. (Focus group-Z-M participant 24)

I posed the following question: Now that aspects of human rights are covered in one of your subjects called Life Orientation, are you now able to mitigate gender disparities in your daily life as a way of exercising your right?

No. our community members have normalized the gender disparities so it is difficult to challenge the problems we are confronted with regard to gender inequalities as such both the community members and we must be sensitized to know how we can challenge these gender inequalities without intimidation. (Focus group-X-F Participant 7)

It is important to be sensitized on gender inequalities so that we can overcome the problems we are faced with. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 15)

Our Community learning centres are not spaces where we can bring issues that affect us. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 17)

The responses indicated that some of the adult educators in Community Learning Centres cover aspects of democracy and human rights. However, they choose not to integrate gender issues into the topics or subjects offered at these centres. Certainly some of the women adult learners are very conscious of them. The results therefore imply a need for gender sensitisation on gender issues so that all adult learners can confront their challenges.

(b) Breaking down traditional stereotypes

Adult learners in the focus group discussions suggested that to mitigate gender disparities in the Cacadu district, traditional gender role stereotypes should be interrogated. The following responses emphasised this need:

Where there are gatherings such as in funerals, weddings, and rituals, community members must critique socio-cultural beliefs and find ways of reducing gender disparities. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 20)

Both men and women must engage in conversations to identify their commonalities, differences, and live harmoniously together. (Focus group-X-F Participant 13).

Other women in mixed focus groups agreed with this view and further said the following:

Only women can empower themselves to make choices or speak out on their behalf, but adult centres should support women to be able to voice out their grievances. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 19)

Women must collaborate with other women and raise their issues with one voice so that their grievances can be heard. (Focus group-X-F Participant 7)

Our parents should change their parenting style of favouring boys over a girl child. (Focus group-X-F Participant 4)

All children must be treated equally. (Focus group-X-F Participant 5)

(c) Improved relations between men and women

Most adult learners in mixed focus group discussions suggested that to mitigate gender disparities in the Cacadu district, relations between men and women should be improved. The following responses emphasised this need:

Women should stop seeing themselves as inferior or minors to men but as their equals. (Focus group-X-F Participant 10)

Men and women must work together as a team to identify their commonalities and differences so that they can accept each other. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 11)

Both men and women must take control of their lives, by solving problems and developing self-reliance. (Focus group-X-M Participant 3)

If men can see women as their sisters they will change their attitudes and treat them as their equals. (Focus group-X-M Participant 8)

The above responses indicated that men and women are willing to work together. Men are willing to change their attitudes if they were to be sensitised to respect women and treat them as equals. This might have been influenced by being outnumbered in FGD, and myself being a woman. Having outlined the thematic analysis and sub-themes from the mixed focus groups, I will now report on how adult learners responded in the women-only focus groups.

4.5.4 Thematic analysis of data from women-only focus groups in Xola and Zodwa Community Learning Centres

4.5.4.1 Key factors that perpetuate experiences of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape

Theme 1: Roles and relations

Under this theme, I report on how adult learners in this study responded to questions on the key factors that perpetuated gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Three sub-themes emerged in focus group discussions on this theme, namely, power relations; status of women in society; and the hidden curriculum.

(a) Power relations

Some participants in the focus group discussions pointed out that gender disparities in their adult centres in the Cacadu district were caused by patriarchal ideologies present in their families and the education system. These sentiments were expressed as follows:

Our husbands want their wives home early and do not tolerate time off duties. (Focus group-X-F Participant 5)

It is not said, but it is felt that when wives go to school, they will get into affairs. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 17)

My husband is jealous of me and sometimes would not allow me to attend evening classes (Focus group-Z-F Participant 18)

The above responses indicated that the issues of power relations still prevails in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Depending on the society, women are still experiencing and attending to different challenges. These challenges affect the livelihood of women in specific settings and restrict mobility of women.

(b) Status of women

According to the participants in the focus group discussions, the causes of gender disparities in the Cacadu district emanate from the status attached to women. These sentiments were given expression in the following responses:

In our community, when you have a younger brother and it happens that he attends initiation school. As an elder sister, you are expected to call him

'buti' (big brother). This status gives him the power to be involved in the decision making of the household. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 19)

Similarly, other participants in the women-only focus group interview declared:

When you are a married woman, you are supposed to listen to your husband. For example, when there is a problem at home, the man has to resolve the problem, and the women have to follow. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 20)

Culture dictates that men have more power and that it is wise for women to remain silent and be led by men or endure violence in the home. (Focus group-X-F Participant 12)

Another female adult learner added that:

The status attached to men and women dictates that men have more power and that it is better for women to remain silent to avoid violence in the home. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 16)

There is a belief that if a woman gets more pay she will not respect her spouse. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 17)

(c) The hidden curriculum

Adult learners in the focus group discussions claimed that the hidden curriculum played a significant part in encouraging gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Participants commented as follows:

As women, we are often singled out by our adult facilitators, either negatively or positively and we are expected to act according to their beliefs to us. (Focus group- Z-F Participant 18)

Adult facilitators' expectations, praise and criticism differ between males and females. Women often receive negative messages when they want to try other things. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 21)

These views were supported by other adult learners who lamented that:

As adult learners, we are generally not treated equally. We are labelled and at times given names when we make noise during lessons. When we try to confront our adult educators that we do not like the way we are treated, they tell us that they are not aware that they are causing harm to us, but they treat us differently so that we can match with the expectations of our culture. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 21)

A female adult learner commented on the discriminatory labelling of women in adult centres:

The female learners are not merely worried about labelling but want to exercise their rights when they make noise. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 10)

In what follows, attention will be focused on the impact of gender disparities on socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

4.5.5 Experienced gender disparities as impacting on socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape

4.5.5.1 Theme 2: Socio-economic factors

Under this theme, I report on how adult learners in the focus group discussions commented on the impact of gender disparities on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Three sub-themes were identified in this theme, namely: the low employment status of women; lack of confidence and low self-esteem; and control over fertility.

(a) The low employment status of women

It was claimed by participants that women occupied low employment status in the community as follows:

If women are not empowered they will stay in low status and fall into stereotypes of being housewives and domestic workers. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 10)

Other adult learners concurred:

Women may be restricted to do domestic related jobs and therefore resist them in trying to do other things. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 20)

Women might be employed in unsecured jobs and paid less. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 19)

Women will not be able to effectively compete with men and as a result continue to be under men. (Focus group-X-F Participant 11)

Women may not be able to effectively compete with men because they lack skills. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 21)

(b) Lack of confidence and low self-esteem

Another consequence of gender disparities on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district is that it leads to loss of confidence and a low self-esteem among women. This claim was given expression in the following responses:

Ba zivha be ba cici ennye into baya sifithla e batwini`. Translation: Due to low status, women will feel small and start to isolate themselves from other people. (Focus group-X-F Participant 4)

Women will start to accept that they are failures in life and as results not accept compliments in whatever they do. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 15)

Women will start to treat themselves badly, drinking excessively and not taking care of themselves. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 18)

Due to lack of training and education, women may have low self-esteem to compete with men for jobs. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 19)

(c) Control over fertility

Another consequence of gender disparities on the socio-economic status of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape put forward by the adult learners in the focus group discussions was that if women are not empowered they would not have control over their fertility. Yang & Morgan (2003) notes that, there is a strong relationship between high fertility and socio-economic status. For example, fertility decreases with increasing socio-economic status, meaning that, as women acquire basic education, they gain more knowledge on contraceptive use, knowledge and perceptions of sexual behaviour. This claim was substantiated as follows:

True, many women in Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape who were discriminated because of their gender in schools missed critical skills. For example, do not use of contraceptives and family planning hence they easily get unplanned pregnancies. (Focus group-ZF Participant 20)

Similarly, other female adult learners in the focus group discussions also associated the effects of gender disparities with a high fertility rate. She said that:

I have a friend of mine who dropped studies, and now she is a mother of four children, worse enough she is a single mother and unemployed. (Focus group-Z- F Participant 17).

Women will start to have unplanned children because they will not know the importance of using contraceptives. (Focus group-X-F Participant 2)

The above responses indicated that education is an important common means to boost socio-economic status of women. Yang & Morgan (2003) notes that in the period

1990-2006 for the whole world, highly educated women or women who acquired basic education had fewer children than women with no education. This therefore means that women who acquired basic education tend to have a wider knowledge of contraceptive methods.

4.5.6 Strategies that can be employed by the Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eeastern Cape

4.5.6.1 Theme 3: Intervention strategies

This theme reports on suggestions put forward by the adult learners in the focus group discussions on how the Community Learning Centres can contribute in assisting people mitigate gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Three sub-themes were identified in this theme, namely, training with special attention to gender equality; the breaking down of traditional stereotypes; women empowerment and social justice.

(a) Capabilities of women must be recognised

Adult learners in the focus group discussions expressed concern about the absence of recognising the capabilities of women to promote gender equality in order to reduce gender disparities in the Cacadu district. They advocated the following:

Both men and women capabilities must be recognised so that they can effectively contribute to socio-economic development of Cacadu District in the Eastern Cape (Focus group-X-F Participant 4)

Women capabilities must be identified and be promoted. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 18)

The above statement was supported by other female adult learners who said the following:

To reduce gender disparities in Community Learning Centres, our curriculum planners should consider the priorities of both men and women (Focus group-X Participant 10).

Both men and women must be treated equally. For example, the capabilities of women must be recognised and they must not be denied access to other careers because of their gender. For example, in science and related careers, women must be made to compete amongst themselves as a way of changing the mindset of women. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 19)

Community Learning Centres should emphasise skills development to help women start their own businesses. (Focus group-X-F Participant 6)

(b) Breaking down traditional stereotypes

Adult learners in the focus group discussions also suggested that in order to mitigate gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape, there was a need to break traditional gender role stereotypes. The following responses emphasised this need:

Where there are gatherings such as in funerals, weddings, and rituals, community members must critique socio-cultural beliefs and find ways of reducing gender disparities. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 18)

Only women can empower themselves to make choices or speak out on their behalf, but adult centres should support women to be able to voice out their grievances. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 19)

This view was backed up by some of the adult learners in the mixed focus group who said that:

Women must take control of their lives, setting their own agendas, gaining skills, self-confidence, solving problems and developing self-reliance. (Focus group-X-F Participant 5)

Men should change their attitudes and start to treat us as their equals (Focus group- X-F Participant 8)

(c) Empowerment

Most adult learners in women-only focus group discussions suggested an urgent need for women empowerment in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape to know female rights and responsibilities. The following responses were made:

Women must be told that change is possible if they can work as a team with other women. (Focus group-X-F Participant 10)

Community learning Centres should encourage us and ensure that we participate in socio-economic development of our communities. (Focus group-X-F Participant 12)

Community Learning Centres should change their approach towards women based on gender disparities. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 15)

Women must be empowered to exercise their rights. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 19)

(d) Social justice

Concerning social justice, as discussed in chapter one, adult learners in the focus group discussions suggested that adult facilitators should recognise issues of social justice in dealing with gender matters. This sentiment was given expression in the following responses:

Adult educators should listen to our grievances during teaching and learning. They must try and identify our needs and interest in learning. (Focus group-X-F Participant 6).

Women potentials must be recognised. In situations where women compete with men in careers that are regarded as masculine, women must be motivated. (Focus group-X-F Participant 11)

Our adult facilitators must treat both males and females equally. (Focus Group-X Participant 7).

Policies that discriminate women must be examined to suit the needs of both men and women. (Focus group-Z-F Participant 20)

Women must voice their opinion on matters being discussed in teaching and learning without fear of being discriminated. (Focus group-X-F Participant 11)

The responses from semi-structured interviews had a greater range and depth of themes but additional insights were provided by women only focus group discussions. In women only focus group discussions, participants were not concerned that their opinions would be misunderstood or have negative consequences. Furthermore, participants in mixed focus groups at first were in disagreement and male adult learners showed some exercise of power over women. However, as the discussions progressed consensus emerged and men started to realise that gender disparities not affected women but men as well. A diverse range of topics in both mixed and women focus group discussions were an interesting characteristic of the focus group discussions. For example, this was evident when males from mixed focus group from Xola and Zodwa Community Learning Centres noted:

Both men and women must take control of their lives, by solving problems and developing self-reliance. (Focus group-X-M Participant 3)

Men should see women as their sisters so that they can change their attitudes and start to treat them as their equals. (Focus group-X-M Participant 8)

In conclusion, this section discussed the research findings accruing from the research conducted in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. In the next section, attention will be directed to the discussions based on the research findings.

4.6 DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

In the previous section the research findings on the critical role of Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape as perceived by adult facilitators and adult learners in this district were presented. The findings were based on semi-structured and focus group discussions that were conducted in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Attention will now be directed to a discussion of these research findings as they relate to the following:

- Key factors that perpetuate experiences of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape;
- How are of gender disparities as impacting on the socio-economic development of women in Community learning centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape;
- Recommendations on how Community Learning Centres can assist in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape

4.6.1 Key factors that perpetuate experiences of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape

4.6.1.1 Power and control in the curriculum

The semi-structured interviews revealed that in both the two Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape, adult educators who facilitated adult learners were of the opinion that they were not involved in the decision-making process by the Ministry of Higher Education on the development of the curriculum in Community Learning Centres and that this disempowered them from mitigating gender disparities in the district. The decision not to involve them as decision-makers in the construction of the adult learning curriculum enabled the state to impose its control and reproduce its power and control, over the content of the Community Learning curriculum. In addition, the divide between policy and practice was most evident in these two Community Learning Centres where a requisite gender policy was not

included in formal curriculum programmes. The data also suggest that adult educators do have some control to enacting the curriculum but they do not do it.

In these Community Learning Centres, power and control manifested at the level of policymaking where decisions were made on how adult education should be shaped, financed and implemented, in the interaction amongst learners and facilitators. McLaren (2003) claims that schools reinforce and maintain issues of power and control through different components of the curricula at the behest of the Department of Higher Education. These include subject choice, course content, tests, textbooks, and teachers. In a similar manner, the Department of Higher Education also decides on subject choice, course content, tests and which textbooks are to be adopted. This situation leaves both the facilitators who facilitate adult learners, and adult learners in Community Learning Centres with a minimal choice regarding the courses for which they can enrol and the use of textbooks.

Findings from the semi-structured interviews also indicated that adult educators who facilitate adult learners distanced themselves from policy matters arguing that it had nothing to do with them. Because they were policy matters initiated by the officials in power in the Department of Higher Education, they were not involved in the planning of these policies. It is not just the curriculum. Data also shows that the behavior towards learners is also gender based. Moore (in Klassen & Lamanna, 2009:95) observes that in this instance, adult educators who facilitate adult learners end up accepting the control imposed upon them by those in power. In the light of this, acquiescence to control by those in power accounts for the continued practice of gender disparities in both the public and private sphere, especially in the case in the Cacadu district in the Eastern Cape. While this might be the case, teachers also tend to exercise their power over the Lerner. In many instances, other students' willingly accept the power of the adult educators to influence their behavior or in perpetuating the gender disparities.

In a recent study of pedagogy in secondary education in Namibia, Tubaundule (2014) also identified the prevalence of power and control in the curriculum and the significant influence it brings to bear on how teachers view their role in the classroom. The findings of his study revealed that the support and involvement of teachers in the curriculum development process have a significant influence on the implementation of the intended secondary school curriculum. In addition, his findings indicated that a lack

of knowledge and clarity of curriculum goals may influence teachers to revert to the technical implementation of the intended secondary school curriculum at the classroom level.

4.6.1.2 *The hidden curriculum*

Similar to the issue of power and control in the curriculum, the findings in this study revealed that the hidden curriculum plays a part in reproducing gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. This was evidenced in the way in which adult expectations, praise and criticism of males and females differed in that women were more often subject to negative responses in this regard. McLaren (2003:86) states that the hidden curriculum is the unconscious outcome of the schooling process. It is made up of unofficial, not explicitly stated instructional influences, experiences and messages acquired by students via the school environment. This also applied to Xola and Zodwa Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Coetzee (2001:302) and Arnot (2004:28) highlight how teasing and labelling can be viewed as strategies for restraining males and females from moving into either the feminine or masculine territory. The social label “noisy” suggests that female adult learners had strayed too far into the masculine domain. The notion of hidden curriculum was highlighted in focus group discussions when the participants indicated that there are generally not treated equally, labelled and at times given names when they make noise during lessons. Women also noted that when they try to confront these instances their adult educators would tell them that they are not aware that they are causing harm to them including what is left out of the curriculum for example, gender.

Azimpour and Khalilzade (2015) also contend that the hidden curriculum creates the silencing and passivity of adult female learners. For example, the female adult learners noted that when they try to confront such instances, their adult educators told them that they treated them differently in order to match with the expectations of their culture. Similarly, Horrison (2000) found that the hidden curriculum could contribute to the embedding of existing gender roles and power dynamics. In particular, the hidden curriculum has been identified as a key factor in reinforcing current power dynamics with males as dominant and females as passive.

4.6.1.3 Power relations

In a similar fashion to the influence of patriarchal ideologies in endorsing gender disparities, the findings in this study revealed that the causes of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of Eastern Cape not only arise in the division of labour and unequal resources between women and men, but also in ideas which ascribe different abilities, attitudes, desires, personality traits and behaviour patterns to women and men. Issues of power relations are therefore also perpetuated by ideologies in interactions with other structures on social hierarchy such as class, race and age. In Community Learning Centres adult educators in the semi-structured interviews argued that power manifests itself at the level of policy making where decisions are made on how adult education should be shaped, financed and carried out, and in the interaction between adult educators and learners in a learning conversation. For example, adult educators in this study indicated that they are not involved in the initial stage of the curriculum design and yet they are the implementers of the curriculum. Adult educators also noted that if they were involved in decision making that would help them to include issues of gender that affects their learners.

Furthermore, from the focus group discussions the findings from the study revealed that issues of power relations also prevail in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. The central argument from the participants in focus group discussions was that the deeply rooted inequalities that affect them are a result of power relations that emanate from the male-dominated social and cultural structures. For example, in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape when young men have undergone the initiation process, they are supposed to be called (*Buti*) big brother, even when they are young. This gives them the power to be involved in the decision-making process in the family life and exercise their authority over their young or elderly sisters. From the findings of this study, there is also evidence that female learners are discouraged by their husbands from attending adult classes. One of the female participants indicated that her husband is jealous of her and sometimes would not allow her to attend evening classes. These findings correlate with Meyer (2008) who claims that men exercise their power either to create obstacles to women's education or to block them from attending adult classes. Men's collective efforts for gender related issues have the potential to be an effective strategy for imposing power over women. From the girl's earliest age, men start practicing their decisive role in the most important issues of

women's life ranging from limiting women to access education and her role in the community. This was the guiding idea behind the present study intended to challenge issues of power relations in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. For example, participants advised that women must voice their opinion on matters being discussed in teaching and learning without fear of discrimination and they must be told that change is possible if they work as a team with other women.

4.6.1.4 Socialisation/ gender role stereotypes

It emerged from the present study's findings, that the way females and males are socialised contribute to gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. The findings indicated that daughters are brought up safely or are usually protected by their parents and their minds are programmed to behave in a particular way. Young women also never try to challenge these instances because they have been stereotyped according to the traits they are assumed to possess by virtue of their biological makeup. For example, from the findings one of the female adult learners noted that parents protect their daughters from an early age and their minds are programmed to behave in a particular way. In most cases women will take this as the norm and never challenge this. Broader structural forces such as prevailing socio-economic conditions, political institutions and patriarchal institutions and practices play a critical role in shaping and reproducing gender norms, gender roles and gender identities. This means that, as Kulik (2002) states, the family not only directly passes on ideologies, values and norms through the child learning behavioural patterns and attitudes from their parents but also indirectly from those instances that still block women from pursuing certain careers. For example, this includes the belief that electrical engineering and civil engineering are meant for men because the activities required by the course will harden women's hands and due to the fear of being stigmatised because one has pursued a so-called male career.

With regard to gender role stereotypes, a stereotype is a widely held and widely recognised association between a social group and an attribute or attributes (Ngulube, 2010). Stereotypes can be positive, negative or neutral, depending on the context in which they are being used; they can be derogatory, complementary or indifferent (Fricker, 2007). However, stereotypes are mostly represented by the negative attributes that result in discrimination, stigmatisation and inequalities.

This often affects the vulnerable members of society, among them, women and the poor (Boughey, 2002)

Findings from the focus group discussions also revealed that gender role stereotypes act as an obstacle for Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. For example, from an early age women are socialised for marriage roles: wives, mothers and food providers. Women are also raised to believe that they are inferior to men and their place is in the home. Female adult learners also indicated that they normally do not challenge these gender role stereotypes because their culture expects them to behave in a certain way and fear violence if they do not conform. Women also indicated that when they were growing up, they were not expected to be not like boys. It was their responsibility to come back from school early to clean the house and cook for their siblings.

However, it was acceptable for male siblings to return home as late from school as they wished. This therefore indicated that socialisation still contributes to gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Archer and Lloyd (2002:74) argue that traditional gender roles sustain gender stereotypes. In many societies, males are supposed to be assertive, aggressive and independent as well as task-oriented, whereas females should be sensitive, gentle, dependable, and emotional and people-oriented. Portraying women and men in rigid traditional roles also has the potential of perpetuating sex-typed attitudes.

It can, therefore, be argued that gender-role stereotyping, which stipulates the expected characteristic or behaviour of being masculine or feminine, has infused well, the men certainly- but the women seem to be resisting this. The findings revealed that adult educators significantly influence female learners' career choices and aspirations in terms of gender stereotypes. As adult educators interact with adult learners in Community Learning Centres, they influence female learners in opting for certain careers which are seen as careers for women by society and the family.

This present study confirms Meyer's (2008:187) assertion that educators' attitudes and parents' expectations of their learners' gender roles not only influence their pedagogical practices but also how they guide the learners in adopting certain gender roles upon leaving school. The roles, careers, behaviours that are expected in their communities and families are reflected in this.

Moreover, culture dictates that men have more power and therefore it is wise for women to remain silent and be led by men to avoid violence in the home. This therefore implies that adult educators reinforce social bias and discriminatory practices against women through the content and methods of teaching employed in Community Learning Centres. However, the study concentrated on the possibilities (or constraints against them) in the operation of the selected Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Women indicated that they should empower themselves to make choices or speak out on their behalf. The Public Adult Learning Centres should also support women to voice out their grievances and listen to their needs.

4.6.1.5 Status of women

With regard to the status of women findings from the focus group discussions revealed that the status of women is undermined in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. For example, an elderly woman is supposed to call a young man (*buti*) big brother, because he has attended initiation school. This status attached to the young man gives him the authority to be involved in the decision-making of the household. Furthermore, a married woman is supposed to be obedient and listen to her husband. The superior status attributed to men by tradition, norms and beliefs gives rise to the power they exercise over women. Consequently, the roles of women are traditionally considered those of daughter, wife and mother.

Lindsey (2005:03) concurs with these findings when she claims that the status of males and females is often undermined because of the traits they possess by virtue of their biological makeup. However, negative stereotypes result in sexism, that is, the belief that the status of female is inferior to the status of males. Giuliano (2014:04) notes that males are not immune to the negative consequences of sexism, but females are more likely to experience them because the status they occupy is more stigmatised in the family and society than those occupied by men. In the light of these remarks and the present study's findings, it is apparent that from a girl's earliest age, men practise their decisive role in the most important issues of women's lives, ranging from limiting women to access to education and determining her role in the community.

Furthermore, as Moagi notes, in spite of their education, women still occupy an inferior position in the family. Important decisions like pregnancy, size of family, purchase and ownership of property and vehicles are mostly taken by male members of the household. Women also take care of the entire family, send children to school, pack their husbands' lunch and travel to work in overcrowded taxis. In addition, in childhood, a woman is expected to be subservient to her father; in youth, to her husband; and when her husband is deceased, she should continue to be subservient to her in-laws.

The following section summarises the impacts of gender disparities on socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

4.6.2 Experiences of gender disparities as impacting on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape

4.6.2.1 Stereotypes of career choices

Findings derived from the semi-structured interviews indicated that discriminated women are likely to choose careers that are regarded as feminine, such as teaching, nursing and social work, because they have been thus socialised. Many factors influence these behaviours including traditional beliefs. Archer and Lloyd (2002) argue that career choice among female and males is influenced by traditional or cultural beliefs. Similarly, Mcleod (2000) argues that the way females and males perceive themselves and others affects their decision about a career choice. In other words, our social cultural experiences exert strong influences on the attitudes and occupational aspirations of young people. For example, negative stereotypes regarding female ability in science and engineering may have negative influence on attitudes towards the career.

4.6.2.2 Lack of confidence and low self-esteem

Findings accruing from the focus group discussions did not show this but possibilities that could lead to lack of confidence and low self-esteem. Lindsey (2005:28) believes that self-esteem is partly a product of how a person believes others see them and how they are compared with others. The negative effects of these perceptions are more pronounced in female learners than in male learners. Malangi (2004) notes that researchers do not agree unanimously on what influences learners' performance at

school. However, there is a common belief that it is not only cognitive skills that are influential in the achievement of learner's performance at school. McGivney (2001) explains that high self-esteem is a crucial component in achieving positive results in adult education. Ouma (2013) also found that insensitivity on the part of teachers to the needs of female students in schools deprives them of a conducive learning environment and that the overall environment that reinforces gender stereotypes reduces the importance of girls' education and self-esteem compared to that of boys.

4.6.2.3 Less power in the household

Findings derived from the focus group discussions indicated that gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape resulted in women having less decision-making and bargaining power in the household. In this instance, the traditional outlook of society on gender roles plays an integral part in family decision-making. Lindsey, (2005: 51) endorses this when she claims that females, being naturally caring, sensitive and nurturing, are the secondary decision-makers in the family. However, she goes on to observe that several initiatives are being taken to promote gender balance in decision-making in the contemporary modern world, but that adverse gender norms continue to affect women negatively. The extent to which they are affected negatively also depends on other structural factors such as, the education system, religious institutions and civil society.

4.6.2.4 Lack of Control over fertility

Findings from the focus group discussions conducted in this study revealed that gender disparities have led to a lack of female control over fertility and that has impacted negatively on the socio-economic status of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. For example, participants in the focus group indicated that some of their friends dropped out of school due to early pregnancies. These women are single and unemployed with many children due to a lack of critical skills; they did not use contraceptives hence the unplanned pregnancies. Large families make it difficult for women to advance in their careers and in the workplace.

4.6.2.5 Employment in low-paying jobs

The research findings in the present study showed that the differences in opportunities available to females and males with regard to access to education resulted in

employment in low-paying jobs. For example, participants in focus groups noted that If women are not empowered, they will stay in low status jobs and become homemakers and domestic workers. Women will also be employed in insecure jobs and be paid less; as a result they resist trying to do new things. Employment in the formal sector requires skills and experience that are usually obtained through formal education, which has not necessarily been the privilege of women. This was seen to be the case in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape where gender disparities resulted in women looking for employment in informal sectors such as domestic work, the selling of food at food stalls and baby-sitting, since this kind of employment does not require much formal education. However, it should also be noted that women might prefer employment over which they have greater control. A woman running her own business selling food is not necessarily worse off than in a formal job where she is exploited. Thus, informal work is not inherently worse than formal work.

Importantly, Chomombo (2005) observes that since education is often deemed to be useful in gaining employment, especially in the formal sector, women usually have more limited entry to jobs in these sectors than men. It can therefore be argued that parents tend to think that educating a girl-child does not yield economic benefits and, therefore, girls may be less motivated to acquire formal education than boys.

4.6.2.6 Lack of readiness by women to compete with men

Lack of readiness also, competitiveness in 'male' gender it is not necessarily a good idea to foster it in. Socialisation; thus, male and female preferences and experiences of their abilities and job choices tend to differ. Participants in mixed focus groups noted that if women were not empowered, men would not be motivated to study diligently to improve their education because they would expect jobs with very little competition from women. However, there is a strong argument against closing the gender gap.

4.6.3 Recommend ways in which Community Learning Centres can assist by mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape

4.6.3.1 Professional development

For Community Learning Centres to mitigate gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape, adult educators recommended in-service training.

Adult educators indicated that professional development is important because it focuses on the content of gender issues. They also advised that academics should be invited to the Community Learning Centres to empower them in various ways to promote equality in adult education. Professional development coupled with stakeholder participation would enable adult educators to be more gender-sensitive when they facilitate adult learning. Participants suggested that other forms of in-service training and staff development courses provided by the Department of Higher Education should complement the offering of relevant professional development courses or modules in Community Learning Centres. The empowerment of teachers through professional development is in keeping with the current trends in teacher education. Therefore, teachers ought to be involved in in-service training programmes in which they are made aware of gender disparities present in their district in order for them to become gender sensitive in their facilitation of adult learners.

Darling-Hammond (2005) has identified forms of professional development: workshops, guided paper observation with feedback, teacher research groups and demonstration lessons by master teachers. Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman & Kwang (2001:920) have identified other forms such as courses, conferences and institutes as ways of facilitating professional development. These are similar to workshops and have been criticised by most professional development reformers as being ineffective and not linked directly to daily classroom activities. They often occur after school, over weekends and during school vacations. Garet et al (2001) believe that when teachers engage effectively in innovative professional development which occurs during school hours and usually in the classroom, students' achievement will improve. However, Darling-Hammond emphasises that these attempts towards enabling professional development have not been entirely successful as they have repeatedly failed to address what should characterise professional development to make it meaningful and relevant to the daily practices of teachers

4.6.3.2 Capabilities of both men and women must be recognised

Participants in focus groups suggested that Community Learning Centres must recognize the capabilities of both men and women. Arnot (2004:28) describes equality as the recognition of differences such as age, sex, health, bodily strength and intelligence.

However, Ramphela (1995:03) warns that gender equality and equity do not imply that men and women's needs are the same. In other words, gender equality recognises that the rights and dignity of women are the same as the rights and dignity of men. Thus, women's views, interests and needs should also shape community decisions as much as men's do.

The principle of equality, therefore, holds that women should be visible in decision-making situations in all spheres of life, including education. In education, learners should be included and involved. In this instance, adult facilitators should be gender sensitive to the comments directed to male and female learners. Adult educators, however, cannot control all the interactions directly between adult learners in the class, but it is important for adult educators to monitor adult learners' interactions so that they can point out stereotypes and biases perpetuated through jokes, comments and non-verbal gestures. Accordingly, adult educators can discourage insensitivity and discrimination and contribute to the transformation of all structures and traditions which undermine the position of women in society, including education. Equity is therefore needed to redress previously disadvantaged people, and this includes women in the spheres of education.

4.6.3.3 Gender sensitisation

Participants in the focus group discussions suggested that adult educators, adult learners, parents and community members need to be sensitised on gender issues. Participants in focus groups noted that although they are taught about health issues, the need for lifelong learning and human rights in Life Orientation, gender issues are never highlighted. As such, there is a need for gender issues to be treated or regarded as an important subject. Gender sensitivity is not about pitting women against men. On the contrary, education that is gender sensitive benefits members of both sexes. It helps them determine whether gender issues are infused or integrated in the curriculum and whether there are stereotyped generalisations that need to be addressed. Furthermore, gender sensitisation not only requires an intellectual effort and the necessary sensitivity but also open-mindedness because gender sensitisation opens up the widest possible range of life options for both men and women (UNESCO, 2010:346).

4.6.3.4 Empowerment

Participants in women-only focus groups noted that women must be empowered to know their rights and responsibilities. Both men and women must be sensitized that change is possible if they can work as a team. Community Learning Centres should also encourage adult learners to participate in socio-economic development of their communities. According to Narayan (2005), the concept of empowerment can be explored through three closely interrelated dimensions, namely, agency, resources and achievements. Agency represents the process by which choices are made and put into effect. Resources are the medium through which agency is exercised and achievements refer to the outcomes of agency.

In the present study, the notion of women empowerment was borne in mind and there was an element of agency in women-only focus groups. In this study, female participants gained confidence when they suggested how interviews should be conducted. Female adult learners chose to respond in English and IsiXhosa, their mother tongue, during the focus group discussions. Female participants were also eager to learn from one another. Their collective voices represented their identity in this study. Furthermore, agency was also explored during mixed focus groups where men chose to relate well with women, challenging the norms that give them more entitlement than women. The present study therefore indicated that some men were willing to improve their relations with women.

4.6.3.5 Social justice

With regard to social justice, participants in focus group discussions suggested that adult educators should recognise issues concerned with social justice in dealing with gender matters. Participants in women-only focus groups suggested that women's potential must be recognised. In situations where women compete with men in careers that are regarded as masculine, women must be motivated. Policies that speak to gender equality must be examined to suit the needs of both men and women. Women must also be encouraged to voice their opinions on matters discussed in teaching and learning without fear of discrimination.

Chaka-Makhooane, Letuka, Majara, Matatshane, Matela-Gwintsa, Morolong and Motebang (2000:06) have divided issues of justice into categories, namely, distributive

justice, corrective justice and procedural justice. Distributive justice deals with the fairness of the distribution of something among several people or groups. Corrective justice is concerned with the fairness of the response to a wrong or inquiry to a person or group. Common responses include making a person who has wronged another suffer in the form of punishment, or giving back something that was stolen or paying for damages. The last category deals with procedural issues and is concerned with the fairness of how information is gathered or how a decision might affect all people interested in an issue. In the quest to redress past injustices or corrective injustices, one form of discrimination should not be substituted with another. For example, if affirmative action is used to mitigate gender disparities or eliminate gender disparities, it would have to be utilised for a given period as distributive justice and would have to disappear immediately when the goal of balanced power relations is achieved. The purpose of distributive justice should aim at balancing the structures of power and should only be given to remedy past injustices (Chaka-Mokhooane et al., 2000:26).

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter set out to present the results of the research in addressing the main research question of the study: Do Community Learning Centres in being tasked to promote equity and redress in their present form help people to mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape? The presentation of the results of the research findings and discussions were mapped out according to the research questions and sub questions, the aim and objectives of the study. In the following chapter, the study will be concluded by the major findings of the study; conclusions and recommendations made as a result of the study; and suggestions for further studies on the theme of the study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study set out to research the problem of gender discrimination in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape and the role that Community Learning Centres could play in mitigating gender disparities in this particular district. In doing so, it posed the following research questions:

- What are the common factors that perpetuate experiences of gender disparities in the Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape?
- How are gender disparities experienced as impacting on the socio-economic development of women in the Community Learning Centres in Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape?
- What possible strategies can be initiated to the Community learning Centres to assist people in mitigating gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape?

A post-colonial indigenous paradigm was selected to undergird the study. According to Wilson (2008), a post-colonial indigenous research paradigm is informed by relational ontologies, relational epistemologies and relational accountability. In a relational ontology, the social reality that is investigated is understood in relation to the connections that human beings have with their surroundings. Wilson (2008) further notes that, the thrust of the discussion is that among the indigenous and former colonised societies, people are 'beings' with many relations and many connections. They have connections with the living and the non-living, with land, with earth, with animals and with other beings. There is an emphasis on I/We relationships as opposed to the Western I/You relationship with its emphasis on the individual. In short, a post-colonial indigenous paradigm can be seen as a culturally specific discourse in this study because it is based on indigenous people's premises, values and worldviews.

To gather the required research data, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used in this study.

The data collected from using these research methods were then coded into themes to enable my interpretation of the data in terms of its significance in addressing the main research problem, namely: Community Learning Centres in being tasked to promote equity and redress, do not in their present form help people to mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

The present chapter is concerned with the following:

- Major findings of the study.
- Setting out the recommendations that the study deems to be important in addressing the aim of the study, namely, to recommend ways in which Community Learning Centres can assist in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Firstly, the major findings of the study will be discussed and then recommendations will be made on how to address these factors.

a) Power/ Power relations

The study has shown that issues of power/ power relations are the key factors that perpetuate gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. In the light of this, acquiescence to control by those in power accounts for the continued practice of gender disparities in both the public and private sphere, especially in the case in the Cacadu district in the Eastern Cape. While this might be the case, teachers also tend to exercise their power over the Lerner. In many instances, other students' willingly accept the power of the adult educators to influence their behavior or in perpetuating the gender disparities. In most African countries, the school curricula (of government schools) is usually prescribed by education departments. This means that the government decides what ought to be taught in terms of courses and the contents of those courses. The department of education also decides on which textbooks to be adopted. This situation leaves both the teacher and students with very little choice on courses to enroll in. While this might be the case, teachers also tend to exercise their power over the Lerner.

In many instances, other students' willingly accept the power of the adult educators to influence their behavior. The central argument from the participants in focus group discussions was that the deeply rooted inequalities that affect them are a result of power relations emanate from the male-dominated social and cultural structures. One explanation is that how we understand power is determined by the political and the theoretical interest that we bring to the study of power. For example, democratic theorists are interested in different things when they study power than social movements' theorists or post-colonial theorists (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Issues of power relations are also perpetuated by ideologies in interactions with other structures on social hierarchy such as class, race and age. It is also important to note that it is not only the officially prescribed curriculum that has great influence on adult learners but the hidden curriculum also plays an important role in perpetuating gender role stereotypes.

a) The hidden curriculum

The research findings of the present study revealed that there is gender disparity in the wider society; Community learning Centres both perpetuate and reflect this in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. The general findings from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions revealed that on a daily basis, male and female adult facilitators and adult learners are challenged by, and encounter, problems which reflect the gendered character of the relationships between men and women. The research findings indicated that, the training, within the family reinforce and foster the concept of traditional femininity and masculinity. That is, a patriarchal culture combined well with the ideologies of a contemporary, conservative, and prejudiced way of selecting knowledge produces a culture of patriarchy.

5.2.1. Recommendations that Community Learning Centre need to take into account in addressing the key factors that perpetuate the experiences of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape

The following recommendations are made in this regard:

Shared responsibility

There should be a shared responsibility in eliminating gender role stereotypes by means of mass education. Accordingly, it is recommended that adult educators and adult learners should work together in critiquing norms and beliefs that continue to perpetuate gender role stereotypes. Where there are gatherings, they must talk about gender issues and challenge these instances because community members have normalised gender disparities. In Community Learning Centres, adult learners must dramatise these matters affecting women to show gender related issues and let other adult learners comment on them. Community members and citizens as active participants with adult educators and learners should work together for the attainment of shared goals to mitigate gender disparities in Community Learning Centres.

5.2.2 Experiences of gender disparities as impacting on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

Firstly, the potential of gender disparities on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district in the Eastern Cape will be discussed and recommendations will be made regarding what Community Learning Centres can do to mitigate gender disparities in this regard.

Findings from the focus groups discussions indicated that, the experiences of gender disparities had the possibility of impacting on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape and may lead to low self-esteem among women, the employment of young women in informal sectors, less decision-making power and less competitive adult learners.

Recommendations that Community Learning Centres need to take into account in addressing the impact of gender disparities on the socio-economic development of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape are the following:

a) Rights and responsibilities

Women must be responsible for their lives and their choices. These could relate to financial issues, education, careers, life happiness and security. Women, however, should be able to express their feelings in a way that is open and honest without fear of discrimination or violence, but in doing so still respect other people. For example, women can empower themselves to make choices or speak out on their behalf, but adult centres should support women to be able to voice their grievances.

b) Women empowerment

One way of mitigating gender disparities is through women empowerment. Participants in this study recommended that women must be empowered to know their rights and responsibilities. Women must be told that change is possible if they can work as a team. In addition, Community Learning Centres should encourage women and ensure that they participate in socio-economic development of their communities.

c) Raise the aspirations of girls and their parents

Girls should have role models that inspire them to achieve their aspirations. Parents also need to ensure opportunities for advancement for their daughters and not limit aspirations to marriage and motherhood.

5.2.3 Recommendations on what Community Learning Centres can do to mitigate gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape

The findings of this study include several strategies that were proposed by the participants that would enable Community Learning Centres to mitigate gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Examples are the provision of professional development, training programmes and materials that promote gender equity. The findings also identified contemporary educational practices, processes and developments that can be adopted in efforts to reduce gender disparities. Adult facilitators, policy makers, teacher trainers and other stakeholders should be encouraged to engage these strategies to help both female adult learners reach their full potential as human beings.

Issues such as fairness, equity, and social justice in the relationships between men and women in the community must, therefore, be included in the Community Learning Centres curriculum.

Recommendations made that Community Learning Centres should take into account in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape are the following:

Department of Higher Education and training

- The department needs to provide the necessary courses in professional development and in-service training programmes that will inform adult facilitators of strategies that can be employed in mitigating the negative impact of gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

a) Gender sensitivity

Community Learning Centres should include gender issues in its curriculum that will ensure that programmes offered are equally sensitive to both males and females. With the understanding that gender sensitive teaching aims at equality supporting the learning of male and female students, this calls for the promotion and adoption of gender responsiveness teaching practices in Community Learning Centres to correct the gender bias in learning (Kahamba & Sife 2017).

b) Teaching for empowerment with an indigenous goal

Findings accruing from the focus group discussions did not show this. However, Adult educators teaching for empowerment should be able to examine knowledge both regarding the way knowledge misrepresents particular views of the world and regarding a deeper understanding of how the students' world is actually constructed. Knowledge generation, in this case in Community Learning Centres contexts, should have a more indigenous goal and create the conditions necessary for students' self-determination in larger society.

c) Create a visibility of strong female role models

Community Learning Centres should support and create the context for visibly strong women role models whose success is based on the required achievement for their success. Mentoring and role modelling initiatives initiated by women also need to be facilitated in Community Learning Centres.

d) Equity and inclusion

In view of the right to equitable treatment, the Department of Higher Education and Training is obliged to have and foster policies that help to ensure equity in the programmes they advocate and prescribe. At the same time, adult educators should be encouraged by way of professional development and training programmes to do their best to promote these policies.

e) Social justice

Adult educators in Community Learning Centres should be sensitised in in-service training programmes to the importance of issues concerned with social justice, particularly so when it comes to the role of women in society. In so doing, adult educators should be encouraged to engage in a dialogue with adult learners, both male and female, so that they can voice their opinions on matters discussed in the classroom.

f) Improved relations between men and women

Most adult learners in mixed focus group discussions suggested that to mitigate gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape, there was a need to improve relations between men and women. The following responses emphasised this need: men and women should work together as a team to identify their commonalities and differences so that they can accept each other. “Both men and women must take control of their lives by solving problems and developing together”. Men should also start to see women as their sisters to change their attitudes and start to treat women as their equals.

g) Professional development

For Community Learning Centres to mitigate gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape, adult educators recommended in-service training. Adult educators indicated that professional development is important because it focuses on the content of gender and this will help them to reach out to the learners. They also advised that academics should be invited in the Community Learning Centres to empower them in various ways to promote equality in adult education. Professional development coupled with stakeholder participation would enable adult facilitators to be more gender sensitive when they facilitate adult learning. Participants suggested that other forms of in-service training and staff development courses provided by the Department of Higher Education should complement the offering of relevant professional development courses or modules in Community Learning Centres.

Darling-Hammond (2005:05) also considers in-service training as a requirement before teachers can be expected to engage in tackling new methods of teaching. The empowerment of teachers through professional development is in keeping with the current trends in teacher education. Therefore, teachers ought to be involved in in-service training programmes in which they are made aware of gender disparities present in their district in order for them to become gender sensitive in their facilitation of adult learners.

(h) Training with particular attention to gender equality

The participants in the study suggested that both adult facilitators and adult learners need to be trained with particular attention given to gender issues and, particularly, gender equality. For example, participants in focus groups suggested that Community Learning Centres and the curriculum planners should consider the priorities of both men and women. In this regard, both men and women must be treated equally. For example, the capabilities of women must be recognised and women must not be denied access to careers because of gender.

(I) Gender sensitisation

Participants in the focus group discussions suggested that adult educators, adult learners, parents and community members need to be sensitised on gender issues. Participants in focus groups noted that although they are taught about health issues,

the need for lifelong learning and human rights in Life Orientation, gender issues are never highlighted. As such, there is a need for gender issues to be treated or regarded as a subject. Gender sensitivity is not about pitting women against men. On the contrary, education that is gender sensitive benefits members of both sexes. It helps them determine whether gender issues are infused or integrated in the curriculum and whether there are stereotyped generalisations that need to be addressed. Furthermore, gender sensitisation not only requires an intellectual effort and the necessary sensitivity but also open-mindedness because gender sensitisation opens up the widest possible range of life options for both men and women (UNESCO, 2010:346).

(j) Empowerment

Participants in women-only focus groups noted that women must be empowered to know their rights and responsibilities. Women must be sensitized that change is possible if they can work as a team. Public Adult Learning Centres should also encourage adult learners to participate in socio-economic development of their communities. According to Narayan (2005), the concept of empowerment can be explored through three closely interrelated dimensions, namely, agency, resources and achievements. Agency represents the process by which choices are made and put into effect.

By way of conclusion, these recommendations are intended to address the problem on which this study has focused, namely, Community Learning Centres in their present form are not successful in promoting equity and redress. Thus, they do not contribute to mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. By noting and adopting the recommendations made above, the Department of Higher Education and Training will be able to ensure that Community Learning Centres programmes promote equity and redress and in so doing, contribute to mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has been concerned primarily with the role of Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. To date, no research has been conducted on the role of Community Learning Centres in mitigating

gender disparities in this district. Very few academic publications are available on the role of in mitigating gender disparities, and none on the role of Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Consequently, this study was limited to adult learners and adult educators in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

Furthermore, the fact that only two Community Learning Centres participated in this study limits the generalisability of the findings of the research. Thus, the study cannot claim that the two Community Learning Centres represent all the centres in the Cacadu district or in the Eastern Cape. However, it is hoped that readers might consider the data and the interpretations given in this study and consider to what extent the findings may be regarded as transferable to other similar contexts.

Another limitation in this study is that in some instances, some males did not participate in the focus group discussions conducted because they felt threatened that their status in the community would be challenged. My own gender might have also influenced the views of male participants and at times, they undermined the views of female adult learners and, consequently, did not reveal their attitudes towards the issue under discussion at the beginning of the group discussions. However, as the discussion proceeded all men engaged because they realised that gender disparities do not only affect women but men as well.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that further research should to be conducted on the following issues that emerged during the data collection process, but did not get adequate attention in the present study.

- A study in which Community Learning Centres officials would participate, in order to investigate their views on the mitigation of gender disparities in the implementation of Community Learning Centres. Such a study directed at determining and evaluating their beliefs and attitudes concerning the importance of gender sensitivity in Community Learning Centres would be invaluable. These officials are expected to lead by example in preparing pre-service and in-service courses for adult educators in assisting them to deal with gender sensitivity and disparities.

- Further research on the role of Community Learning Centres involving a larger sample of respondents from different districts of the Eastern Cape is necessary.
- The present study concentrated on two Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. The sample involved in this study was, therefore, very small. It is therefore suggested that a study be undertaken involving a much bigger sample that would identify and investigate the factors that contribute to gender disparities in education in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

5.5 CONCLUSION

Based on the study findings, it is evident that gender disparities emanate not only in the home in Community Learning Centres also reinforce and maintain gender disparities through different components of curricula and pedagogy. Infusing gender sensitivity courses in Community Learning Centres is therefore crucial if such gender disparities are to be mitigated in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

The present study has also shown that gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape are compounded by a lack of confidence and low self-esteem among women, a decrease in bargaining power in the household. All these factors mitigate against the empowerment of women in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. Empowerment should not only entail the ability to make decisions and other observable actions but also should mean motivation and purpose that individuals bring to their action. Adult educators, policy makers in Department of Higher Education and Training, teacher trainers and their stakeholders in Department of Higher Education and Training in the Eastern Cape should be encouraged to engage these strategies to help female learners reach their potential as human beings. Such educational strategies in Community Learning Centres in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape should be characterised by fairness, equality, and the values embedded in social justice when it comes to the role of women in society.

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ANNEXURES

Annexure A: Interview schedule (for adult Educators)

1. What does gender disparity (or possible differences in opportunities between men and women mean to you? Describe an experience that stands out for you in terms of gender disparities?
2. What are some of the factors that perpetuate the way we are treated as women? Please provide some relevant examples.
3. In your opinion what area of life do you think women are most lagging behind in life (what are the main reasons for these inequalities? Do you think adult facilitators' actions or the curriculum contribute to maintaining these differences in opportunities between men and women? If yes, how?
4. do you think you and other women have contributed in socio
5. Do you think adult facilitators are prepared to break with or they are content with this situation?
6. What policies or guidelines do you have at your disposal that intend to reduce or assist women mitigate gender disparities in their daily lives in your Community Learning Centre or community?
7. If you were to work closely with curriculum developers of higher learning in the designing of the curriculum, what proposals would you put forward to reduce experienced gender disparities in Community Learning Centres?
8. As an adult educator can you suggest a plan of action (project plan) that can be initiated by the Community Learning Centres to assist adult learners mitigate experienced gender disparities in their daily lives in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

Thank you for your time. If there is any omission in this interview you are Free to add any additions either by comments or asking questions.

Annexure B: interview schedule (mixed focus groups)

(Men and women)

Introduction

Let us do a quick round of introduction. Can each of you tell the group your name, if you are working or have a small business? I am undertaking a research on the role of adult basic education in mitigating gender disparities in the workplace and schools. Our conversation today will be on your experience with regard to gender disparities. Please keep in mind that there are no wrong or right answers. Please note that this conversation will be recorded by research assistant and will be taking notes during the focus group to ensure we adequately capture your ideas. However, comments from the focus group will remain confidential. The information gathered in this focus group will not be used for anything other than this research. Do you have any comments before we begin?

1. I would like to hear from you what experienced gender disparities mean to you as men and women? How do you understand by the term gender disparity?
(a) Have you once been treated differently because you are a man or woman?
Please provide examples.
2. What are some of the key factors that perpetuate experienced gender disparities between men and women in your Community learning Centre or in your community? Do you think women and men are treated equally? If yes, how?
If no, in what area of life do you think women are most lagging behind in life (and what the main reasons for these inequalities are?)
3. How do experienced gender disparities affect both men and women in their daily lives? Please provide examples.
4. In your point of view, what do you think can be done to reduce the differences in opportunities experienced by men and women in Community Learning Centres or your community?
5. Is there anything that you can think of that men and women can do together to reduce gender disparities in Community Learning Centres or in their community? Please provide your suggestions

Thank you for your time. If there is any omission, you are free to add by either offering addition comments or any questions.

Annexure C: interview schedule (women only focus groups)

Introduction

Let's do a quick round of introduction. Can each of you tell the group your name, if you are working or have a small business? I am undertaking a research on the role of adult basic education and training in mitigating gender disparities in the workplace and schools. Our conversation today will be on your experience with regard to gender disparities. Please keep in mind that there are no wrong or right answers. Please note that this conversation will be recorded by research assistant and will be taking notes during the focus group to ensure we adequately capture your ideas. However, comments from the focus group will remain confidential. The information gathered in this focus group will not be used for anything other than this research. Do you have any comments before we begin?

- 1 I would like to hear from you what experienced gender disparities mean to you.
How do you understand the term gender inequality?
(a) Have you once been treated differently because you are a woman?
2. What are some of the factors that perpetuate experienced gender disparities in your Community Learning Centre or community?
- 3 How do experienced gender disparities affect you and other women in your daily lives? Please provide relevant examples.
- 4 Do you think you and other women contribute to socio-economic development of your community?
if yes, in what ways are you engaged in the socio-economic development of your community.
if no, kindly explain how you think Community Learning Centres can assist you to contribute in the development of your community.
- 5 In your point of view, what do you think can be done to reduce experienced gender disparities experienced by women?
- 6 Is there anything that you can think of that we can do together with others to mitigate gender disparities?

Thank you for your time. If there is any omission, you are free to either add by offering additional comments or ask any questions.

Annexure D: Follow up questions to the sites (individual interviews)

Individual interviews

1. What recommendations do you have for the way in which the centres (or classes) can contribute more to reducing gender disparities (inequalities or imbalances) in your Community Learning Centres or community? (As I mentioned earlier, no one will associate your name with it, and even centres will not be named.)-----

2. Thank you very much for your time- your ideas will be fed into the thesis and will be read by others.

Annexure E: Follow up questions (focus group discussions)

Interview guide for focus group question

1. What do you think the Community Learning Centers are doing (if anything) in helping people to mitigate gender disparities? Please provide relevant examples

2. Do you think your involvement in this Centre in grade 10, 11 and 12 has helped you in any way to reduce gender disparities (or inequalities imbalances between men and women in your daily lives) or see things differently with regard to gender issues?

3. If yes? Can you elaborate further on how you are dealing with gender disparities in your daily lives in these grades and how your involvement in this learning centre has helped you?-----

4. Can you think of further activities in the classes or in the centre that could be helpful towards balancing out gender disparities in the community? Please offer any ideas that you think may be helpful-----

5. If no? In what ways do you think women should be assisted to deal with gender disparities and what do you think could be done in the Community Learning Centers to help with this? Let us have a discussion on this. Who would like to start?

Lastly, how did you experience this research process overall. Did you find that it helped you to talk through issues with other focus group members? Did you learn anything from the discussion? -----

Please can you give examples-----

Thank you very much for your time

Annexure F: LETTER SEEKING PERMISSION FROM DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING (EASTERN CAPE)

University of South Africa
College of Education
Preller Street
Muckleneuk Ridge
Pretoria
P.O Box 392
0003, South Africa
6 April 2016

RE: Permission to conduct research concerning "A critical role of the role of Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape

My name is Xoliswa Tawana and I am a Lecturer in the department of Adult Basic Education and youth development at the University of South Africa. I am also a full time Doctor of education student with the University of South Africa. My contact number is +27 12 4294256 or 0726812238. Email address: tawanx@unisa.ac.za or tawanax@yahoo.co.uk. I am doing research under the supervision of Professor P. Higgs from the department of Educational Foundations at the University of South Africa and his contact details are: cell 0829207014 Email: higgsp1@unisa.ac.za . We have funding from Academic Qualification Improvement Programme (AQIP) intended to improve qualifications of lecturers. We are inviting your department to participate in a study entitled "A critical investigation of the role of Community Learning Centres in mitigating gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape.

The general aim of this study is to investigate what Community Learning Centres are doing (if anything) in assisting people to mitigate gender disparities in their daily live in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape. In order to suggest a plan of action that can be used for improvement to overcome gender disparities. Your department has been selected for this purpose. The research study involves conducting semi - structured interviews with four adult educators from your Community Learning Centres, as well as conducting four focus group discussions.

Two focus group will be mixed (men and women) and two will consists of women only. The interviews should take only 1 hr 20 mins minutes each and the focus group discussion should take about 80 mins. Every effort shall be made to ensure that minimum disruption of learning occurs during the research process. During and after the research process the following ethical issues shall be upheld: the name of your Public adult learning centres shall remain confidential, and participants' voices will be audio recorded only if they agree. Their names will not appear in the reporting (unless they wish to be acknowledged). Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity of the research participants shall be ensured and participation is voluntary. Furthermore, participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

The benefits of this research will go a long way in the design of a curriculum that considers gender equality. Such curriculum should contribute to adult learner's achievement. Participants will not be exposed to any risk by participating in interviews and focus groups. Feedback procedure will entail sending a copy of the research report or a summary of findings to the participants.

Your assistance shall be sincerely appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Xoliswa Tawana

Lecturer (Adult Basic Education and Youth development)

Annexure G: Letter of acceptance from the Director of the Department of Higher Learning

From: Nombini Teka [mailto:nombini.teka@ecdoe.gov.za]
Sent: 09 January 2018 02:00 PM
To: Tawana, Xoliswa
Subject: REQUEST FOR A VISIT

Dear Xolie

Is it possible for you to make a visit to us when possible. We need to discuss few things concerning my units.

Hoping to hear from you

Regards

Ms Teka

Acting Regional Manager

Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) assumes no liability for direct and/or indirect damages arising from the user's use of ECDoE's e-mail system and services. Users are solely responsible for the content they disseminate. ECDoE is not responsible for any third-party claim, demand, or damage arising out of use the ECDoE's e-mail systems or services

Annexure H: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

Dear prospective participant

My name is Xoliswa Tawana and I am a lecturer in the department of Adult Basic Education and youth development at the University of South Africa. I am also a full time Doctor of education student with the University of South Africa. My contact number is +27 12 4294256 or 0726812238. Email address: tawanx@unisa.ac.za or tawanax@yahoo.co.uk . I am doing research under the supervision of Professor P. Higgs from the department of educational foundations at the University of South Africa and his contact details are: cell 0829207014 Email: higgsp1@unisa.ac.za . We have funding from Academic Qualification Improvement Programme (AQIP) intended to improve qualifications of lecturers. We are inviting your school/centre to participate in a study entitled “the role of adult basic education in mitigating gender disparities in Cacadu district, Eastern Cape.

WHAT IS THE RATIONALE OF THIS STUDY?

The rationale of this study is to contribute to information on the possible role that could be played by Community Learning Centres in assisting people to mitigate gender disparities in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

Your participation in the research will go a long way in the design of a curriculum that promotes gender equality. Such a curriculum should contribute to learner achievement.

NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

You are asked to participate in an interview/ focus group discussion. I will conduct both the interview and focus group discussion. There are no correct and wrong answers. The study involves audio recording and focus group discussion will only be audiotaped if you agree. There is also a provision if someone does not agree that they can rather be individually interviewed with notes being taken. Interviews should take 40 minutes and focus group discussion should take an hour.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participation in this study is voluntary and there are no obligations to consent to participate. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving any reason.

This informed consent form has two parts as follows:

- Information sheet(to share information about the study with you)
- Certificate of consent(for signature if you choose to participate)

Part 1: information sheet

Introduction

The research study is being carried out in three selected adult centres in Cacadu district, Eastern Cape (South -Africa).

Participant selection

You have been selected because of your experience and knowledge. The study has up to 24 (adult learners) and three adult educators.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this research is voluntary; you are free to withdraw at any stage should you so wish

Procedure:

You will be asked to attend a focus group session with the researcher and join a focus group discussion at your centre OR to attend an interview with the researcher.

Duration

The research exercise requires about one hour of your time

Risks

You will not be exposed to any form of risk by participating in the focus group

Benefits

Your participation in the research will go a long way in the design of a curriculum that considers gender equality. Such curriculum should contribute to adult learner's achievement.

Risks

You will not be exposed to any form of risk by participating in the interview or attending a focus group discussion

Will the information that I convey to the researcher and my identity be kept confidential?

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give.

Confidentiality

This information that you provide in the focus group discussion shall only be used for research purposes only. You do not need to disclose your name or the name of your centre during the focus group sessions. Focus groups will only be audiotaped if you agree. There is also a provision if someone does not agree and prefers to be individually interviewed with notes being taken. You have the right to refuse or withdraw from the research study at any given time without being penalised.

My cell phone contact number is +27 726812238. Feel free to contact me on this number should need arise. My supervisor is Prof P. Higgs and he can be contacted on 0829207014. Email: higgsp1@unisa.ac.za. A report of the study may be submitted for publication but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. While effort will be made by the researcher that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat information confidentially. I shall however, encourage all the participants to do so. for this reason I advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group.

Protecting the security of data

The researcher will store hard copies of your answers for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/ filing cabinet in the office of the researcher/ library for future research or academic purposes, electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further research Ethics review and approval if applicable. Electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme

Payment or any incentives for participation in the study

If transport costs are needed for participants to get to the venue for interview or focus group discussion this will be supplied.

Has the study received ethics approval?

A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher or supervisor if you so wish.

Results of the research

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Ms Xoliswa Tawana at 0726812238, Email: tawanx@unisa.ac.za . The findings are accessible for five years should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact my supervisor Prof P. Higgs and he can be contacted on cell +0829207014. Email: higgsp1@unisa.ac.za or contact the research Ethics Chairperson Dr M. Claassens. Email: mcdtc@netactive.co.za

Part 2 consent to participate in this study

I -----(participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefit and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read the foregoing information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to participate and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty in this study.

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publication but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the audio recording of the interviews and focus group discussions. (If not, please state this here. -----)

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant name & surname (Please print-----)

Participant signature

Date -----

Day/ month/ year

Statement by the researcher

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and all the questions asked by the participant have been answers correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this informed consent form has been provided to the participant

Print name and surname of researcher-----

Signature of researcher-----

Date-----

Annexure I: Ethical clearance Certificate

18 May 2016



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

18 May 2016

Ref : 2016/05/18/55468772/25/MC

Staff: Ms X Tawana

Student Number: 55468772

Dear Ms Tawana

Decision: Ethics Approval

Researcher: Ms X Tawana
College of Education
Department of ABET and Youth Development
Tel: +2712 424256
Email: tawana@unisa.ac.za

Supervisor: Prof. P H ggs
College of Education
Department of Educational Foundations
Tel: +2782 9207014
Email: higgs1@unisa.ac.za

Proposal: The role of Adult Basic Education in mitigating gender disparities in Cacadu district (Eastern Cape)

Qualification: D Ed in Social-Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Final approval is granted for the duration of the research.

The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee on 18 May 2016.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
- 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the College of Education Ethics Review Committee. An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the



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Annexure J: Proof of registration

Annexure J: UNISA Approval Certificate



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

18 May 2016

Ref: 2015/05/18/55468772/25/MC

Staff: Mark Tswana

Student Number: 50831714

Dear Mr Tswana

Decision: Ethics Approval

Researcher: Mr M. Tswana
College of Education
Department of AS&T and Rural Development
Tel: +2712 4247256
Email: mawema@unisa.ac.za

Supervisor: Prof. P. Higgs
College of Education
Department of Educational Foundations
Tel: +2712 9257014
Email: phiggs@unisa.ac.za

Proposal: The role of Adult Basic Education in mitigating gender disparities in Case 11 District (KwaZulu-Natal)

Qualification: U-Ed in Social Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethical approval is granted for the duration of the research.

The application was reviewed in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee on 18 May 2016.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions:

- 1) The researchers will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles enshrined in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
- 2) Any adverse circumstances arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the interpretations, should be communicated in writing to the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee. An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the



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